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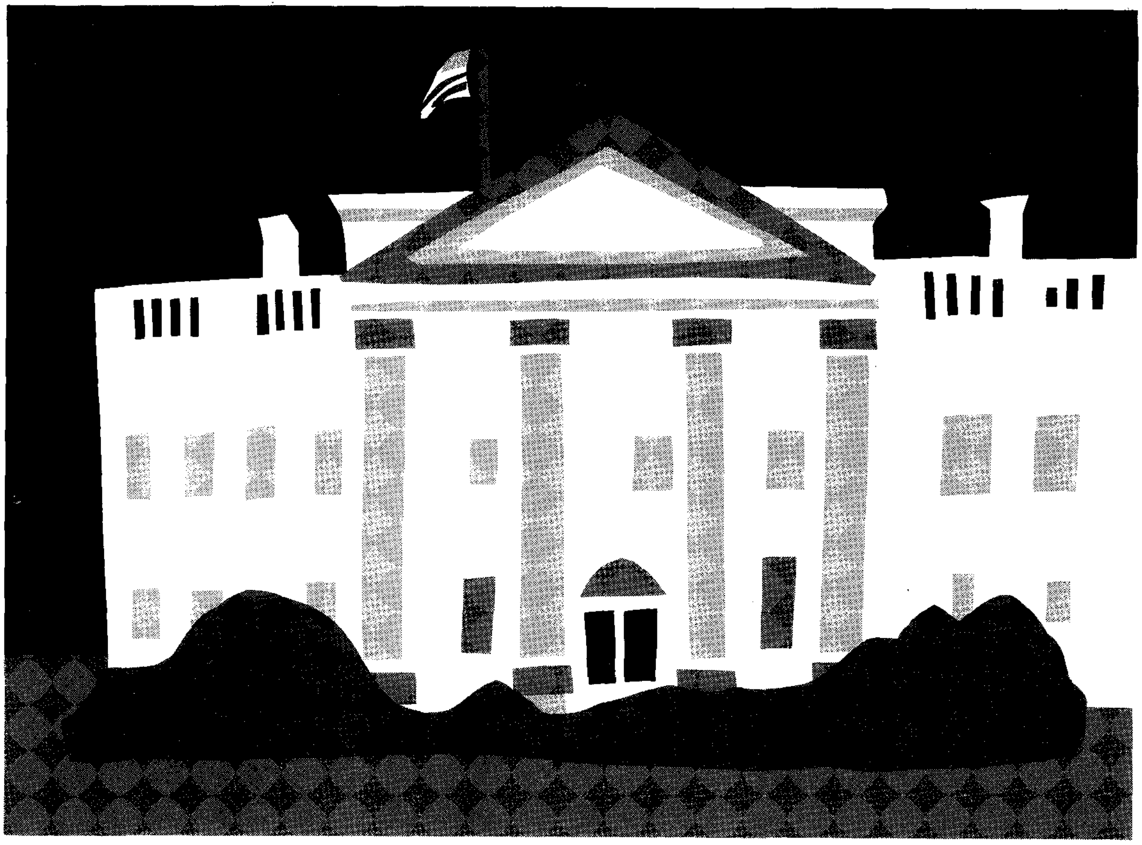

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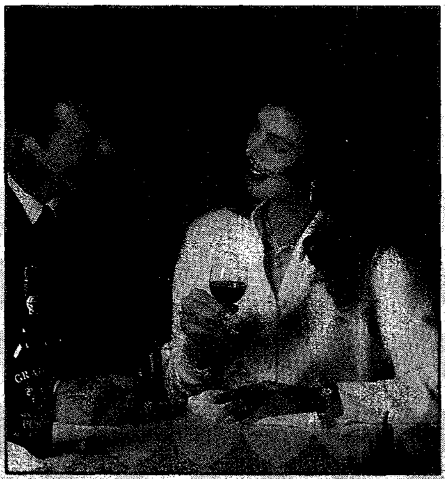

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THE NEW YORKER
25 WEST 43RD STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036
(212) 840-3800

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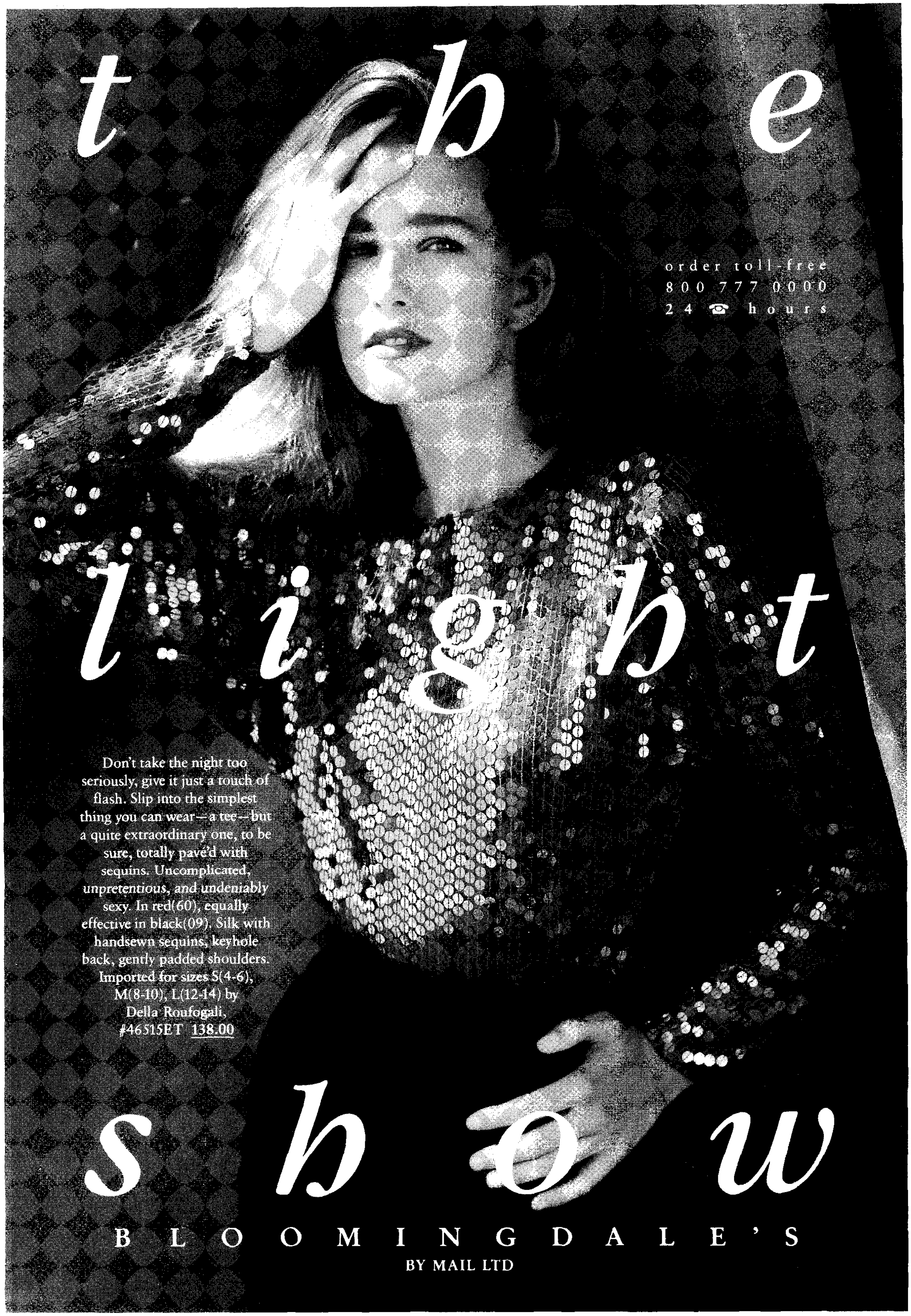
THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 25 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036; Steven T. Florio, president and chief executive officer; Sam R. Spoto, vice-president; Stuart H. Jason, vice-president and treasurer; Ruth A. Diem, vice-president and human resources director; Frank Mustacato, vice-president and circulation director; Virginia L. Jespersen, vice-president and business manager; Lynn Guthrie Heiler, advertising director. Branch advertising offices: 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60601; 41 Osgood Place, San Francisco, Calif. 94133; Suite 1460, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90036; 67½ Chestnut St., Boston, Mass. 02108; 19 South Audley St., London, W1Y 5DN. Metropolitan Publishers Representatives: 3017 Piedmont Road, NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30305; 2500 So. Dixie Highway, Miami, Fla. 33133; 3016 Mason Place, Tampa, Fla. 33629; 3 Church St., Suite 503, Toronto, Canada. M5E 1M2. Carol Orr & Co., Publishers Representative: 3300 Oak Lawn, Suite 500, Dallas, Tx. 75219. Vol. LXV, No. 33, October 2, 1989. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. © 1989 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., in the United States and Canada. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The magazine's name, logo, and various titles and headings herein have been registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $32.00; two years, $52.00. In Canada, one year, $50.00. Other foreign, one year, $56.00, payable in advance.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80322.



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

WHEN we were growing up in New York, we used to get taken quite often to the Equity Library Theatre, and we always left the productions there wishing fervently that we could offer our services to them. It wasn't that we had anything special to give—or any illusions about a career in the theatre. It was just that everyone else there seemed to be giving *something:* the actors and technicians were working without pay (it's a "showcase" theatre), and during the spirited entr'acte, when the company took up a collection, our mother always wrote out a check and put it in the hat.

So we were really sort of moved, the other day, to learn that the Baldwin Youth Theatre, in conjunction with E.L.T., has set up a volunteer program for thirty to forty New York City high-school students. The program will include not only free coaching in acting, voice, and dance (which Baldwin has offered since 1982) but also backstage experience with E.L.T. productions, which this season have been designed around a New York theme (the first of them, the musical "Wonderful Town," opens this week). To select the students, an audition will be held this Saturday, September 30. One of the judges, Jeffrey R. Costello, E.L.T.'s new producing director, is barely out of high school himself.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

The Aunts—Mia Dillon, Bethel Leslie, and Ann Wedgeworth in a play by Gary Bonasorte. Previews through Oct. 3. Opens Oct. 4 at 7. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 307-7171.)

Classical Drama and Comedy of Japan—Three different programs presented by the Kita Noh Theatre, a twenty-six-member troupe, with the Nomura Kyogen Theatre. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. Oct. 3 at 7:30, and Oct. 4 at 1:30 and 7:30.)

Equity Library Theatre—The season kicks off with a production of **WONDERFUL TOWN,** the musical version of "My Sister Eileen." Previews begin Sept. 28. Opens Oct. 3 at 8. (103rd St. and Riverside Dr. 663-2028.)

Home Games—A comedy by Tom Ziegler, with John Braden, Kymberly Dakin, and Michael E. Knight. Previews through Sept. 30. Opens Oct. 1 at 7. (Hudson Guild Theatre, 441 W. 26th St. 760-9810.)

Mastergate—Larry Gelbart's satire of the Iran-Contra affair. The large cast, directed by Michael Engler, includes Joseph Daly, Merrill Holtzman, and Priscilla Shanks. In previews. (Criterion Center Stage Right, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Secret Rapture—David Hare's play, which is still running in London, is now at the Public in a brief pre-Broadway engagement through Sept. 27. (Broadway previews begin at the Ethel Barrymore on Oct. 10.) The New York cast, directed by Mr. Hare, includes Blair Brown, Frances Conroy, and Mary Beth Hurt. (425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

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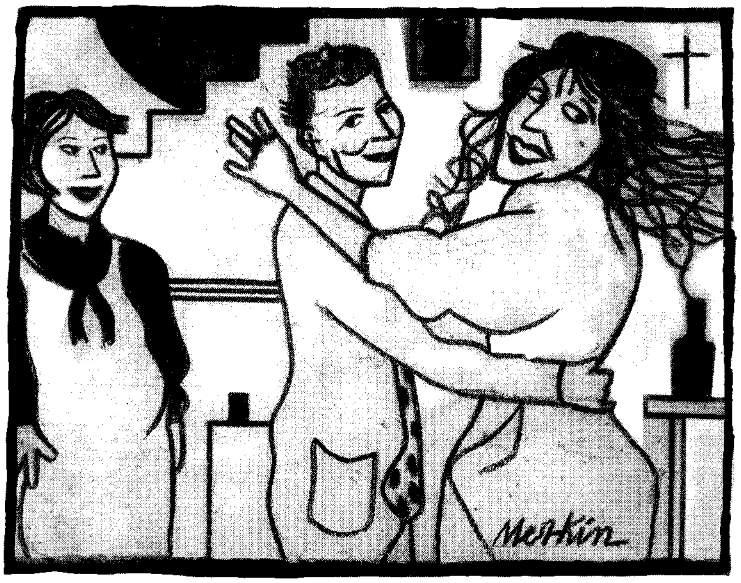

Mia Dillon, Bethel Leslie, and Ann Wedgeworth in "The Aunts"

RECENTLY OPENED

Best Friends—A new play by John Voulgaris that examines the volatile relationship of two lifelong friends, portrayed by Chris A. Kelly and David Conaway. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

Big Hotel—The Ridiculous Theatre Company's revival of Charles Ludlam's 1967 play, directed by Everett Quinton. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, One Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

Call Me Ethel—Rita McKenzie as Ethel Merman in a one-woman show written and directed by Chris Powich. Presented by the American Jewish Theatre. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes Oct. 8.)

Carnage, a Comedy—Straight from performances at the Edinburgh Festival comes this Actors' Gang production, which is directed by Tim Robbins, who also wrote the script (with Adam Simon). (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Oct. 8.)

Hotel Martinique—A music-theatre piece by Kevin Malony that was inspired by Jonathan Kozol's 1988 articles on the homeless, published in this magazine. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

Jerome Robbins' Broadway—A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. The evening is an orgy of family entertainment, a display of theatrical arts and crafts, and a canonization of Robbins and his era. Whether the fifties was your generation or your parents', this is the show for you. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/13/89, under Dancing.) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Lady in Question—Charles Busch's new play, set in Germany during the Second World War, is the perfect entertainment for a cool autumn evening. It's less pointedly a parody of one genre or movie than his last work, "Psycho Beach Party," was, and more a travesty of an entire week's worth of TNT programming, compressed into a single evening of theatre. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Lend Me a Tenor—The setting of this farce by Ken Ludwig is a hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934, where a famous tenor who is booked to sing "Otello" takes an overdose of barbiturates. A substitute must be found. Und Jerry Zaks' direction, all the surprises up t dramatist's sleeve are brought to comic li Philip Bosco, Victor Garber, Tovah Feldshu J. Smith-Cameron, Ron Holgate, Jane Co nell, Jane Summerhays, and Jeff Brooks a the members of the splendid cast. (3/13/8 (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Love Letters—Staged readin of A. R. Gurney's two-chara ter play. Sept. 26-Oct. 1, Co leen Dewhurst and Jos Sommer; Oct. 3-8, Ka Nelligan and Treat William (Promenade, Broadway 76th St. 580-1313.)

The Man Who Shot Lincoln— play by Luigi Creatore, abo the terrible event of 1865 told from Edwin Booth's sid (Astor Place Theatre, 434 La fayette St. 254-4370.)

Midsummer Nights—This mus cal version of "A Midsumm Night's Dream" takes place Laguna Beach in the ninetee sixties. The book and lyrics a by Bryan D. Leys and th score is by Kevin Kuhn. Wi Judith Moore, George Merrit and Brenda Braxton. (St. Pe ter's Church, Lexington Av at 54th St. 688-6022. Close Oct. 1.)

Only Kidding!—Jim Geoghan comedy about standup come dians, in all their panic an desperation, has the ring authenticity, and jokes that in variably pay off. (One mono logue, about a Greek restau rant, is a knockout.) The char acters are an aging Catskills type; a youn comedy team still scrambling for a foothold a jumpy writer; and a beef-brained manage All the actors do well, under the lively direc tion of Larry Arrick. (5/29/89) (Westsid Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

Orpheus Descending—Vanessa Redgrave head the cast of Sir Peter Hall's production of th Tennessee Williams play. Among the othe players are Kevin Anderson, Anne Twomey and Tammy Grimes. (Neil Simon, 250 W 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Other People's Money—Jerry Sterner's comed about a New York stockbroker's attempt t take over a decorous New England busines maintains its suspense from beginning t end. Kevin Conway can seldom have bee better or funnier than he is as Bronx-bor Lawrence Garfinkle, and Janet Zarish play his adversary (with a difference). They ar ably supported by James Murtaugh and Arc Johnson. The performance as a whole is credit to Gloria Muzio, who directed it. A import from the Hartford Stage Company (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd an Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Privates on Parade—Peter Nichols' satiric an profound comedy with music (book and lyric by Nichols, score by Denis King) about a troupe of entertainers assigned to the Britis Army in Malaysia in 1948. Jim Dale outdoe himself as the principal singer and dancer o the troupe, and Simon Jones is fine, too, a his commanding officer. Directed by Larry Carpenter. (9/4/89) (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Closes Oct. 15.)

Shirley Valentine—Willy Russell's play about a Liverpool housewife who, feeling herself engulfed by drab domesticity, flies off to Greece, where she finds a temporary lover and lives happily ever after. With Ellen Burstyn in the title, and only, role. Directed by Simon Callow. (2/27/88) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Showing Off—As comedy revues go, this one—written by Douglas Bernstein and Denis Markell—isn't at all bad. The winning performances by Mr. Bernstein, Marilyn Pasekoff, Mark Sawyer, and Valerie Wright often make the material seem better than it is, but ultimately they don't compensate for the over-all smugness of what is essentially life-style comedy. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

Sweeney Todd—Bob Gunton and Beth Fowler in the York Theatre Company's production of the Sondheim musical, which had a brief run

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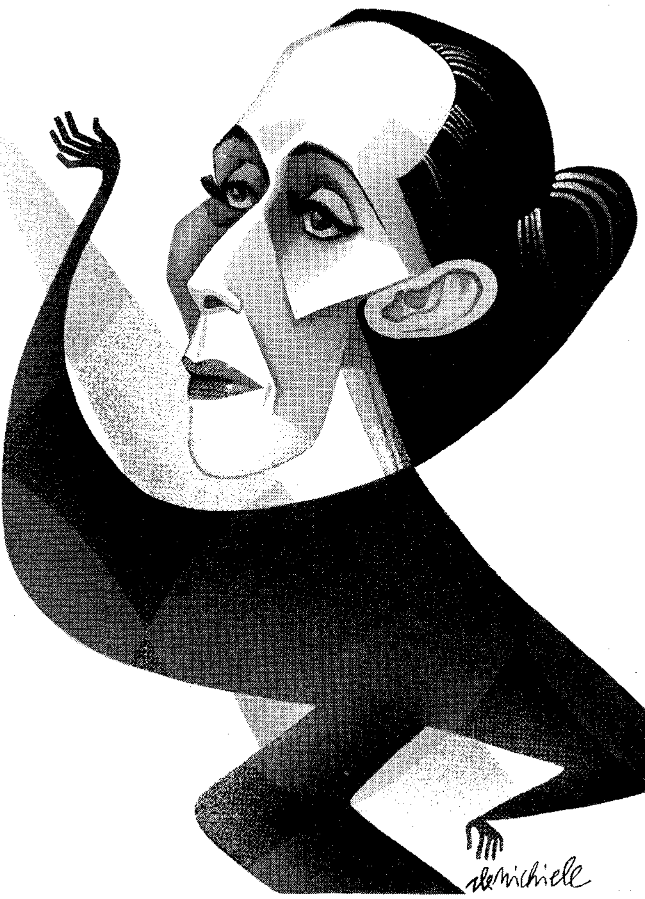
uptown last spring. Susan H. Schulman is the director. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Young Playwrights Festival—Four fully staged short plays by four writers in their teens—Robert Kerr, Janet Allard, Debra Neff, and Alejandro Membreno. Two are directed by Thomas Babe, and one each by Mary B. Robinson and Mark Brokaw. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Oct. 8.)

LONG RUNS

BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Hector Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turned twenty-nine this year. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1989:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. The performers are Toni DiBuono, Karen Murphy, David B. McDonald, and Michael McGrath. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **THE HEIDI CHRONICLES:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With Christine Lahti. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE KATHY AND MO SHOW: PARALLEL LIVES:** Comedy skits and vignettes about gender and its role in society, written and performed by Kathy Najimy and Mo Gaffney. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.) . . . **M. BUTTERFLY:** David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play. With Tony Randall and A. Mapa. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **RUMORS:** This farce about a party to celebrate a couple's tenth anniversary (the host and hostess are mysteriously absent) may well be the funniest play that Neil Simon has written. It is acted to perfection by, among others, Ron Leibman, Joyce Van Patten, Charles Brown, and Jessica Walter, under the impeccable direction of Gene Saks. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 246-0102.)



Martha Graham

DANCE

HAD you gone to the sixth annual New York Dance and Performance Awards—the Bessies—at the Brooklyn Academy of Music recently, here are some of the things you would know:

•Members of the Bessie awards committee attended some seventeen hundred performances altogether during their deliberations.

•Dance Theatre Workshop, in Chelsea, whose director, David White, is a prime mover in keeping the Bessies going, celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary this year.

•Awards-committee voting results are kept under wraps so well that a number of the recipients seated themselves in the BAM balcony, occasioning the longest lag between the awards' announcement and the honorees' receipt of any such ceremony in the five boroughs.

•Judging from the performances between presentations of awards, to tell whether something is downtown dance or performance art, look closely at the stage. If the floor is clear, you are probably watching dance. If it's covered in debris, little balls, or goo trailing from buckets, performance art is a good bet.

•Dancer Rob Besserer, a former Obie and Bessie winner and a co-host (with Reno) at this year's Bessies, has dedicated a dance to Senator Jesse Helms. As presented during the ceremonies, it consists of Mr. Besserer performing a line of chaîné turns while he wears a traditional Scottish kilt, which twirls up to reveal the traditional Scottish nothing underneath.

•Dancenoise, who specialize in physical anti-censorship comedy, may have unrolled a sign at the end of their Bessies performance reading "NEVER GIVE AN INCH," but while a piece they presented at "Serious Fun!" over the summer featured full-frontal nudity, the excerpt offered at the Bessies had everyone in briefs.

•When praising dancers, you may want to avoid the following language "stunning," "harrowing," "universal and imaginative," "subtle melding of form and character," "immeasurable contribution," "viable link," or "rogue visceral adolescence" (all drawn from this year's Bessie citations).

•Sitting for substantially longer than three hours, the new, "shorter" length for these ceremonies, is still a challenge.

Martha Graham Dance Company—Opening performances of a three-week engagement that will run through Oct. 22. Oct. 3 at 7:30: A celebration of Miss Graham's ninety-fifth birthday, with Mikhail Baryshnikov in the première of "American Document," a new work based on the 1938 ballet of the same name, narrated by Cecilia Peck. Also on the bill are "El Penitente" and "Night Chant." . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 8: "Diversion of Angels," "Dark Meadow," "Deep Song," and two short works choreographed by company members. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

American Indian Dance Theatre—A brief engagement by this company of twenty-four dancers, singers, and musicians from sixteen tribes, among them the Apache, Cherokee, and Zuñi. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Sept. 26-29 at 8, Sept. 30 at 2 and 8, Oct. 1 at 2 and 7:30, and Oct. 3-4 at 8. Through Oct. 8.)

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NIGHT LIFE

WE'VE always had a weakness for rock bands that know how to use a string section, so it's no surprise that we took to Strange Cave. We first saw the band a few years ago, at the China Club, when it was still a "side project" of James Mastro, who was then guitarist and co-songwriter for the Bongos; Mastro eventually left the Bongos to attend to his fledgling group full time, and Strange Cave now seems to be a Band on the Verge of a Record Contract. Among their strengths are Mastro's lyrical, infectious pop songs, a muscular rhythm section, and, above all, those strings—a cellist and a violinist, given prominent roles in the arrangements and often featured as soloists. Strings can turn rock sappy or bloodless, but they can also, as in this case, bring out new levels of emotion. Mastro told us that though some people might be inclined to compare the band with Electric Light Orchestra, a more likely progenitor would be the Rolling Stones. "I like the way they used strings in songs like 'Ruby Tuesday,'" he said. "They have a rough, spontaneous sound, and that's something I try to keep to."

In the original lineup, Mastro, surrounded by four women (plus a male drummer), looked like a musical Lothario, but now, he says, with four men and two women, "the hormone level of the band has gone up." Strange Cave was nominated by *Musician* last year as one of the country's ten best unsigned bands, and their recent shows (they're appearing at CBGB on September 29) have been dotted with industry scouts. Mastro told us, "There's been a lot of 'Love you, babe, love you' lately."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—In the lobby, people come and go talking of the Forty-fourth Street Marching and Chowder Club, which used to meet here, and of Lerner and Loewe, who knocked out "My Fair Lady" here, and of **MONTGOMERY, PLANT & STRITCH,** a Houston-based singing trio who are currently appearing in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Shows at nine-fifteen Tuesdays through Saturdays. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A big, soigné cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, in the heart of the fur and fashion-student districts. **HELEN SCHNEIDER,** a Brooklyn-born blues singer who had a one-woman show called "A Flapper's Folly" a few years back, winds up her act on Oct. 1. Pop singer and balladeer Jeff Harnar begins his engagement here Oct. 3.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A jazz club that would be a perfect stop on a bus tour (there's even a souvenir shop that sells Kodak). It's a good idea to make a reservation and show up *well* in advance. Sept. 26-Oct. 1, singer-pianist **LES MC CANN** teams up with saxophonist **EDDIE HARRIS,** and organist **JIMMY MC GRIFF** performs with saxophonist **HANK CRAWFORD.** Singer **BILLY ECKSTINE,** whose famous baritone comes equipped with a wide vibrato, starts up on Oct. 3. First set at nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The walls and columns are basic black with some rainbow detailing here and there—the place looks a little like the outside of a van. If you end up without a seat, you can repose without fear at the bar—finally, a club where they don't force you to drink. **MELISSA ETHERIDGE,** a husky-voiced, Kansas-born singer-guitarist who's been likened to a "yuppie Janis Joplin," performs Sept. 26-30. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar, tucked between a D'Agostino supermarket and a greengrocery. In 1969, when Bradley Cunningham and a partner bought it, it was called the Stirrup. Its light is distinctive, something between dim generic tavern light and refined haze; its patrons are famously gabby; its piano, which Paul Desmond bequeathed to Mr. Cunningham, has been played by many first-rate musicians, including Jimmy Rowles, Tommy Flanagan, and Dave McKenna. Pianist **JOANNE BRACKEEN,** who has gone to the bench for Art Blakey and Stan Getz, among others, holds forth with bassist **CECIL MC BEE** Sept. 25-30. **DANNY MOORE, JOHN HICKS,** and **MIKE FORMANEK** play here on Oct. 1; and **RICHIE BIERACH, RON MC CLURE,** and **ADAM NUSSBAUM** begin a week-long gig Oct. 2. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLOS I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—The "great savory *pot au feu* called New York" (in the words of the great romantic Duke Ellington) has loads of West Indian restaurants, but not too many that feature name-brand jazz bands. Through Oct. 3, the bandstand will be occupied by a trio comprising Elmer Gill, Kohji Tohyama, and Donald Gill. Music from nine-thirty.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a small, well-upholstered room decorated with quaint Marcel Vertès murals (a nude at her easel, a leaping poodle), is a place where time pretty much stands still. 1988 was the year for Sondheim albums, and **JULIE WILSON'S** came out on top. The singer is in action Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in a bar whose pillars and walls are decorated with Ludwig Bemelmans park scenes (a man and his bulldog, rabbity creatures at play, schoolchildren and a nun), singer **RONNY WHYTE** is at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CAT CLUB, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—This room, which caters to thrash-metal buffs and cooler heads on weeknights, opens its doors on Sundays to swing-music fans, most of whom come to Lindy. Feet jitter, skirts fly, and a limber, nattily dressed gent gets a look on his face that says "Watch my next move, darlin'." Up by the stage, two men who have come stag scatter their feet when the band breaks into "Jumpin' at the Woodside." The New York Swing Dance Society is responsible for these Sunday-night meetings. Music from eight to midnight.

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, 25 Third Ave, at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, punks, posers, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. The motif is prehistoric punk—there's a Stone Age mural, assorted toy dinosaurs and pterodactyls, and a bartender who, on a recent evening, was sporting a T-shirt that read "Die, Yuppie Scum." The schedule: the **SENDERS** on Sept. 25; John Ford and Ani Di Franco on Sept. 26; singer, pianist, and red-hot mama **PHOEBE LÉGÈRE** on Sept. 27; the Funky Knights on Sept. 28; and **SYLVAIN SYLVAIN** on Sept. 29. Show times vary. Dining.

DELTA 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A long, rambling bar and restaurant with a white-trash-chicken-shack theme. The decorator went kind of hog-wild with all the old filling-station and soft-drink signs and the hubcaps and the dime-store portrait of the King and the display of dozer caps an the shingle from the taxidermist in Spanis Fort, Alabama—but it's a friendly enoug place. Sept. 28 belongs to **LOUP GAROU,** zydeco outfit led by transplanted Louisiana James Macdonell. Gospel groups perform o Monday nights, and other bands—mostl rock or R. & B.—fill up the rest of the weel Shows after nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), an other exotic Southern fare.

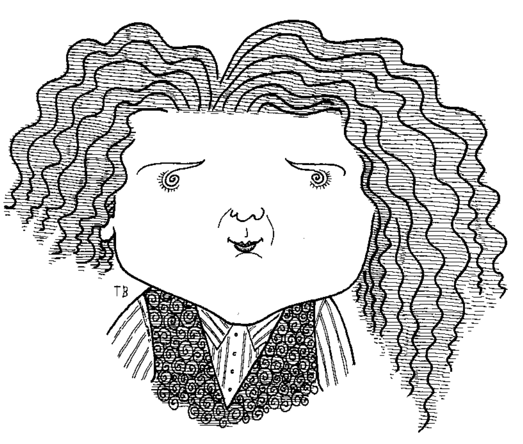
FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533 7902)—There's not a lot of elbow- or heac room in this downstairs jazz club, but th musicians sometimes make you forget a about it. Keyboard player **ONAJE ALLAN GUMB** and his quintet will be here Sept. 26-Oct. 1 a trio belonging to **TOMMY FLANAGAN,** who fc many years served with distinction as Ell Fitzgerald's musical director, is in residenc as of Oct. 3. On Mondays, guitarist-invento **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, lead a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753 0101)—A satisfying combination of Chines food and homegrown music. Rubbernecker may see the moon wheeling by the greenhouse roof on its regular tour of romanti Manhattan. The pianists who pass througl here are among Gotham's finest. Vibraphonist **TEDDY CHARLES** and **DICK KATZ** will b here Sept. 26-Oct. 1; **CAROL BRITTO** and **MAJO HOLLEY** start up on Oct. 3. Music from eigh Mondays through Saturdays, and from sever on Sundays.

GREENE STREET, 101 Greene St. (925-2415)—This is such a gorgeous, thirties-ish movie se of a place, you expect gunmen to burst in a any moment. The restaurant and bar—forested and twilit—is about the size of a football field, with the piano at the fifty-yarc line. If your seats are good enough, you'l hear some able pianists, including **PET MALINVERNI** Sept. 25 and Sept. 29-30, and John Nilsen Sept. 26-28.

J'S, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An Upper West Side jazz room, one steep flight up from the hurly-burly. Jazz people are on the premises nightly except Sundays when a jukebox stocked with sixties rock anc soul lights up. The current roster include groups led by Mike Rabinowitz (Sept. 25) Virg Dzurinko (Sept. 26), Rich Iacona (Sept 27), **JOHN PIZZARELLI** (Sept. 28), Randy Sandke (Sept. 29), and Rick Stone (Sept. 30). **BILL MAYS** concentrates on Ellington-Strayhorn inventions on Oct. 2. Music from eight Mondays througl Thursdays, anc from nine Friday and Saturdays Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place with dark-wooc panelling, white tablecloths, anc brass-figurine lamps. The musicians gather around the Steinway that sits in the dining room, next to a brass-railed partition, but chin music is often the dominant sound here. Knickerbocker regular **JUDY CARMICHAEL,** a California-born pianist whose main inspiration comes from Harlem—that is, from the stride-piano style of Fats Waller and James P. Johnson—works with saxophonist Mike Hashim Sept. 26-30. Beginning Oct. 3, the house belongs to a trio led by **STEVE KUHN,** a pianist who has served with John Coltrane and Stan Getz, among others. Music from nine-thirty.



Mick Hucknall of Simply Red, at the Ritz

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—The façade is a Silver Eagle bus, the kind your itinerant musician cat tools around in. The inside features some stuff you probably wouldn't find in a county-line roadhouse—like a wallful of de-luxe Gibson guitars—and some you might expect to find: beer, neon beer signs, and men wearing dozer caps. Rock, country, and blues dominate the musical agenda. **KINKY FRIEDMAN,** whose song "Dear Abbie" was not appreciated by Ms. van Buren (she sued him), shows up Sept. 26,

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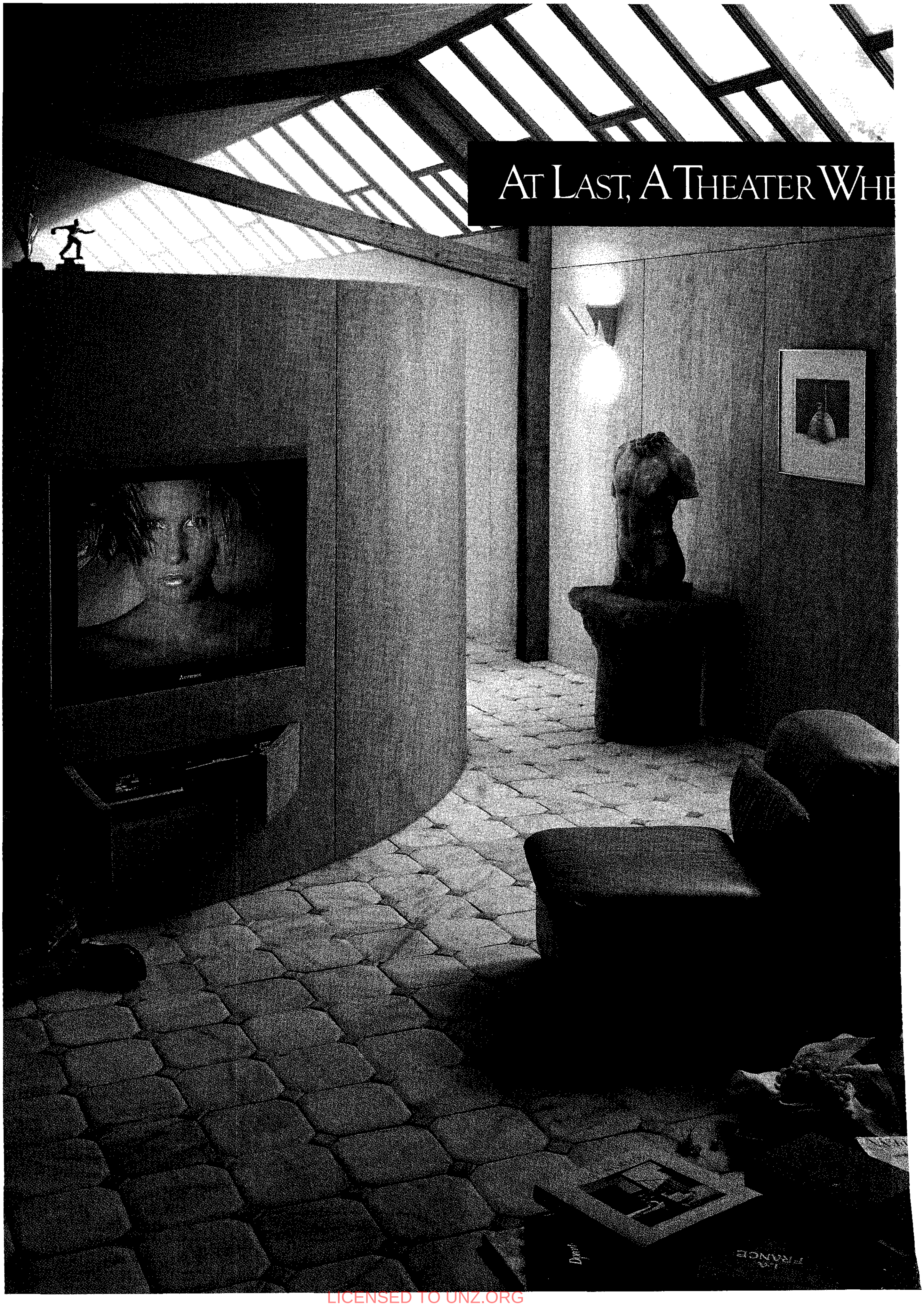
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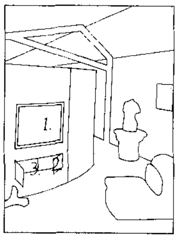

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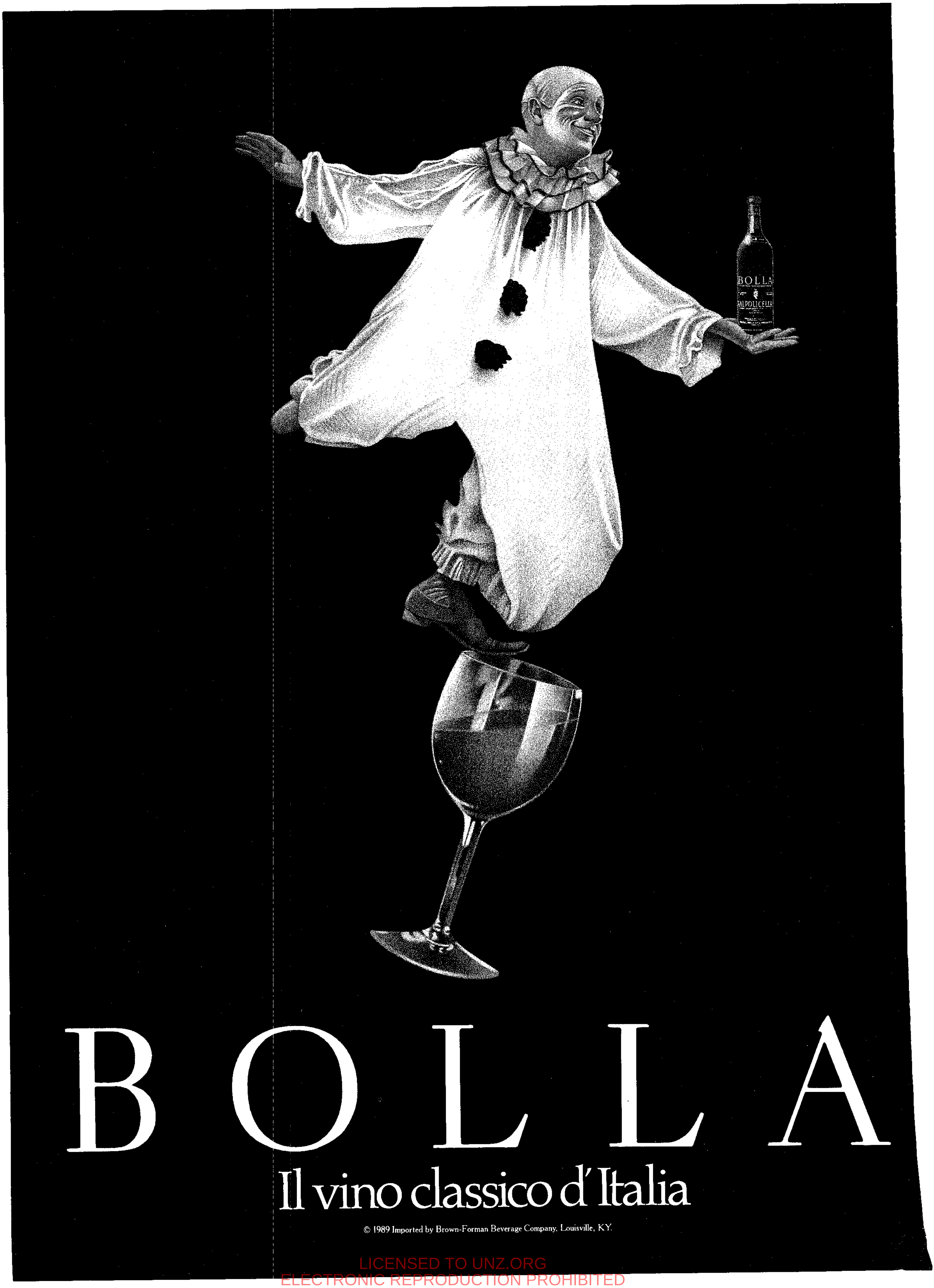
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

along with the **NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE** (they started as a Dead spinoff band in the hippie era). **LIVINGSTON TAYLOR** performs on Sept. 27, **JERRY JEFF WALKER** ("Mr. Bojangles") on Sept. 28, and the Georgia group **LOVE TRACTOR** on Sept. 30. Music after nine. Dining.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—A small-pond club for big-fish bands. There's not much here to look at: Maxwell's is a back-room affair with a dingy stage and a baby grand someone apparently tried to papier-mâché. Still, the bookers know their college-radio playlists: Sonic Youth, Wire, and the Feelies have been through recently, and R.E.M. and 10,000 Maniacs landed here before even *you* knew who they were. The contenders: **LOVE TRACTOR** and Spiral Jetty (Sept. 29), Die Kreuzen (Sept. 30).

RITZ, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This rock establishment, which recently moved from the East Village to the former temple of excess Studio 54, is still a place where the customer is not always right. The signature feature of its previous address, the giant Big Brother video screen, has been preserved intact. Upstairs in the balcony, there are designated seating areas for industry and non-industry people. **LOVE AND ROCKETS** will be here Sept. 26-27; **MOLLY HATCHET** comes in on Sept. 30; and **SIMPLY RED,** a soul-tinged English sextet that had a hit with "If You Don't Know Me by Now," performs with Mica Paris on Oct. 1. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Guitarist **JOHN SCOFIELD**—"It's true, I emulate Miles' horn. He's my man, you know?"—brings a trio into this Village temple of jazz (pressed-tin ceiling, grainy b. & w. photos of your favorite demigods, knee-to-knee seating) Sept. 26-Oct. 1; **LESTER BOWIE,** whose trumpet has been responsible for a great number of special effects, will be here with his Brass Fantasy as of Oct. 3. The electrified big band that the late Gil Evans brought here on Mondays—it shimmered a little and rumbled a lot, while Evans, a hands-off conductor, let his soloists blow at length—is now under the direction of his son, trumpeter Miles Evans, and is also in action on Mondays. Shows from ten. Dining.

SWEETWATERS, 170 Amsterdam Ave., at 67th St. (873-4100)—Pink carnations on the tables, shrimp creole on the menu, a sunken dance floor with a "Saturday Night Fever" ball, and a house photographer who offers to take a picture of you and your honey. The stage, dominated by a white grand piano, is uaually given over to soul and R. & B.; the audience shouts encouragement as the band sings about "doin' it all night long" and, a little later, about "taking care of that thing." There's a lively bar, too, separated from the dining room by tinted glass.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the gym-size downstairs room, which, with its black walls, black pillars, and black pipes and ducts, resembles a giant Louise Nevelson sculpture, salsa bands pack them in on Mondays. **DR. JOHN,** the gravel-voiced son of a New Orleans appliance-store owner, will be here Sept. 29-30. . . . ¶ One flight up, in the airy space known as the Terrace Bar, pianist **BILL MAYS** and bassist **STEVE LA SPINA** take care of business Sept. 26-Oct. 1.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—People from all over the world descend the stairs to this ancient jazz club; many of them later emerge from it in an excited condition. Pianist **STEVE KUHN** leads a trio Sept. 26-Oct. 1; **DOROTHY DONEGAN** starts up on Oct. 3. Music from ten.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke-veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather, just mellow out in the basement hippie love pad. The folksinger **TOWNES VAN ZANDT,** who will be here on Sept. 27, numbers among his admirers many fellow-musicians. Steve Earle, a country-rock singer, told a reporter a few years ago, "Townes Van Zandt is the best songwriter in the whole world, and I'll stand on Bob Dylan's coffee table in my cowboy boots and say that."

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	25	26	27	28	29	30
1	2	3	4			

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

THE city's Hammurabis may be squeezing the light out of Times Square with their high-rise construction, but nearby, on the corner of Eighth Avenue and 42nd Street, where we stood late the other night awaiting a Port Authority-arriving friend, the beacons of the naughty and bawdy seemed never to have burned brighter. When our buddy arrived, eager—as someone who has played golf all day with the boss in New Jersey can be—for excitement, we offered the usual suggestions, all a cab ride away. But there were no cabs, so we headed down 42nd Street on foot, and before long a sign for a club called Jammin' caught our eye. Willing to be lucky, we took the cue. No sooner had we walked inside Jammin' than we realized our mistake. It wasn't our learning that the club's a coffee shop by day that surprised us, or the lightning pace of the young woman Miss Kittying around the place serving beers. And we weren't even unnerved by the raucous sounds of the evening's band, Cycle Sluts from Hell. No, what made us blush and sent us out and back down the street in the direction of Show World was the Public Display of Affection being carried on, over near the band area, by a tall, stubbly-bearded fellow and an attractive fortysomething woman, who turned out to be our sixth-grade teacher—known to us then as Sister Michelle.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

NEXT WAVE FESTIVAL—This year's avant-garde showcase starts with performances by Laurie Anderson of a new work, "Empty Places." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Oct. 3 at 7, and Oct. 4 at 8. Through Oct. 15. The festival closes Dec. 3.)

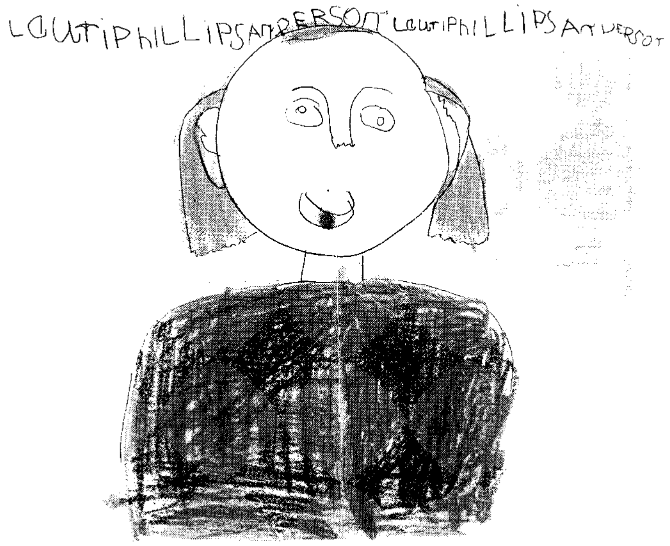
SIEGFRIED & ROY—For years a top draw in Vegas, these two illusionists (who met on the luxury liner the Bremen) are here for a three-week engagement. They'll shoot a lepjag (not a new economy car but a feline hybrid) out of a cannon, turn a beautiful woman into a six-hundred-pound white tiger, and make other beautiful women and rare cats disappear before your eyes. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. Through Oct. 15. For information about schedules and tickets, call 757-3100.)

LINDA MUSSMANN—Presenting the final part of her epic work "Civil War Chronicles." This episode portrays Lincoln on the eve of his assassination. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Sept. 27 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

"THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY"—A music-theatre piece about love, madness, and fishing, presented by the Front Lawn, a three-member group from New Zealand. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Sept. 28-30 at 8, and Oct. 1 at 3.)

"FRANK DELL'S THE TEMPTATION OF ST. ANTONY"—This Wooster Group production is performed by seven live actors and three more on video. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Thursdays through Sundays at 8. Through Oct. 8.)

P.S. 122—Sept. 28-Oct. 1 at 9:30: Frank Maya in rants about Liza Minnelli, Entenmann's baked goods, and his shrink. . . . ¶ Sept. 29-Oct. 1 at 8: Dance works by Keely Garfield. . . . ¶ Sept. 29-30 at 11: Leigh Clark recreates her character LuRain Penny, an aging torch singer. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)



Self-portrait by Laurie Anderson

ART

THERE is a certain predictability to the way The New Museum has tackled chaos, the theme of its current show. The galleries, first of all, are cacophonous—in fact, "Signs of Chaos" sounds quite like the surpassingly chaotic Malcolm McLaren exhibition, at The New Museum last winter. Furthermore, the walls have been papered over with tabloid-style images meant, of course, to evoke the chaotic—or random, or senseless—quality of the days we live in, and also, perhaps, to suggest a style of installation favored by the late Andy Warhol, who printed up "Cow" and "Mao" wallpapers for the purpose of just such a multilayered effect. Then, there are the different sorts of chaos—mathematical, organic-molecular, sociological—represented by the actual art in the exhibition. In the first category, John Cage prevails—probably always has. His torn list of bemusing stream-of-consciousness equations is simply, perfectly absurd.

Among the participants in the organic-molecular division, two works stand out: Orshi Drozdik's weird scattering of porcelain objects on a lead

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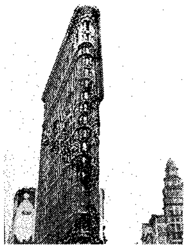

Berenice Abbott,
The Flatiron Building.
Silver print, 1938.

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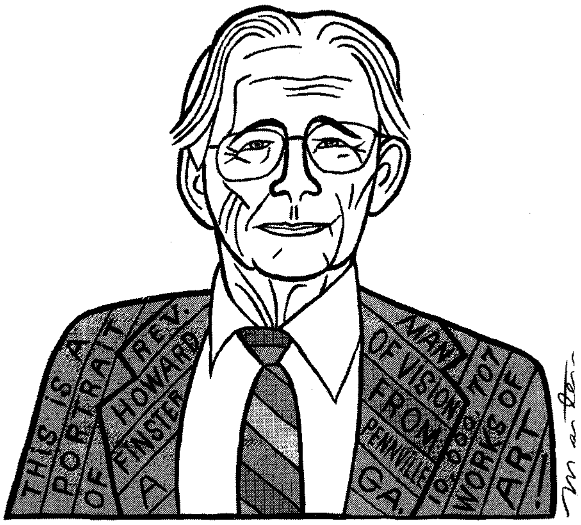
sheet, some of which, it turns out, are analogous to healthy red blood cells, while others are "pathological" (two resemble teeth); and "Palimpsest," composed in part of a room-size environment by Ann Hamilton and Kathryn Clark, featuring pushpinned, yellowing notepad pages that cover the walls and lie under a beeswax floor, and of a Beuysian vitrine in the middle of the room containing two heads of cabbage and many randomly grazing snails. Finally, there are Cady Noland's "Model with Entropy" and "Celebrity Trash Spill"—brilliant, definitive examples of the city-dump-to-institutional-lost-and-found aesthetic genre—and David Smith's chilled, obsessive "stochastic simulations" of the Vietnam War, including a computer program (made with Bill Albright) that puts users through a "random event" with a one-in-three chance of being "hit." Smith's paintings can currently be seen to full advantage at P.P.O.W gallery, through October 14. These are made up of both traditional luxury materials (egg tempera, gold leaf) and high-tech products (Norcore), and are almost psychotically uptight.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MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Masterworks of Ming and Qing Painting from the Forbidden City" features what most scholars regard as the finest examples of late Chinese painting. The variety of sophisticated styles explored during the Qing dynasty is cause for both endless curiosity and a rethinking of the history of abstraction. Through Oct. 29. . . . ¶ "The New Vision": In celebration of photography's hundred and fiftieth anniversary, the museum has put together a show that presents work made between the World Wars by Europeans and Americans. The selection is from the museum's Ford Motor Company Collection. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday, Sept. 26, until 8:45. Please note that on Tuesday, Oct. 3, the museum will close at 5:15.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Pioneering Cubism": Georges Braque once recalled his working relationship with Pablo Picasso as being "like two mountain climbers roped together." This in-depth appreciation of their works from between 1907 and 1914 sometimes ventures to indicate who was leading the climb, but mostly it presents a host of evidence (almost four hundred paintings, collages, construction sculptures, and drawings) pointing to the heights these masters would later scale. . . . ¶ An installation by Matt Mullican of computer-based works, including multimedia plans for a non-utopian model city. It's a handsome exhibition, with, unfortunately, a metaconcept that seems half empty and not a little coy. Through Oct. 24. . . . ¶ Photographs by Aaron Siskind from the permanent collection. Through Oct. 10. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—In this first American retrospective of works by Mario Merz, the Arte Povera artist will show more than eighty pieces from the nineteen-fifties to the present, among them several large installations created specifically for the interior and exterior of the museum. Starts Sept. 28. (Open Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A show of oils, watercolors prints, and drawings by Edward Hopper The hundred and fifty works span the artist's career, and are drawn from the museum's collection. Through Nov. 5. . . . ¶ A current show of works acquired over the past fifteen years provides a fascinating example of institutional collecting. Through Oct. 15. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—An exhibition of thirty Mughal paintings (miniatures, mostly, in opaque watercolors and ink on paper) tracing changes in style from the late fifteenth century to the eighteenth Through Nov. 6. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—George Ohr (1857-1918): The artist's elaborate modernist pottery confounded many during his lifetime, and this retrospective of more than ninety glazed and bisque works suggests that the "mad potter of Biloxi" might have felt more at home in the late twentieth century. Starts Sept. 28. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Nineteenth-century jewelry from the museum's collection. A well-presented, spiffy show that is organized in neat categories appropriate to the categorical imperatives of the Victorian period: materials and techniques peculiar to the age, such as tortoiseshell and human hair, filigree and *pietra dura;* preoccupations, such as flowers and other natural specimens; revivalism, especially of styles of the then newly excavated ancient world; and jeweller stars of the day, in particular Giuliano (who worked in London) and the influential Castellani (of Rome and Naples), both of whom popularized neo-Etruscan and neoclassical designs. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Gardens and Ghettos," an exhibition of more than three hundred works made by or for Italian Jews. The show is divided into four periods: architectural fragments and antiquities from the Roman Empire, the Era of the City States (1300-1550), and the Era of the Ghettos (1550-1870) occupy the first-floor galleries, while paintings and sculptures from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the post-Risorgimento period, are in galleries located on the second floor. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, except Oct. 1, from 11 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Exploring Rome: Piranesi and His Contemporaries": During the eighteenth century, artists flocked to Rome from throughout Europe and produced drawings of grand neoclassic architectural fantasies. This show includes some fine examples of them, notably Robert Adam's sketches of picturesque fantasy ruins set in typical Italian landscapes; Giovanni Panini's watercolors of soaring barrel-vaulted arcades with proper ladies and gents frolicking about them; and some caprices by artists who never even made it to Rome. But the grandeur of Piranesi—whose works are the centerpiece of this fine display—is without rival, be it in feverishly dark etchings of monumental prisons or in drawings for vault and wall decorations that transpose the pomp of heraldry to a symphonic scale. . . . ¶ A modest show paying tribute to Jean Cocteau on his centenary that is comically, Waspily un-Cocteau. This array of letters, sketches, "little magazines," and autographed scores in dim hallway cases, over which one must lean to see the drawings—for instance, of Jean Marais, and of Raymond Radiguet, Cocteau's great love—hanging on the wall, tends to make viewers look like squinting lepidopterists. Perhaps better thus pinned, however, than not pinned at all. Both shows through Nov. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—In many ways, George Bellows (1882-1925) was the consummate chronicler of the gritty turn-of-the-century urban scene. The artist's rich lithographic process, as this show of prints demonstrates, was ideally suited to his views of public showers, the fights, and the pedestrian bustle under the El. Bellows' 1917 print of a dance in a madhouse, recalling Goya, may well be a commentary on the First World War. In the early twenties, Bellows attempted smaller, more intimate images, but these portraits of family and friends are less engaging than his public scenes. Through Oct. 29. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Strange Attractors: Signs of Chaos." Through Nov. 26. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Graham Campbell / Mary Obering—Busy geometric paintings with compositions laid over one another. / The artist uses lots of gold leaf on the surfaces of these paintings and sometimes silver on their edges—more glare than shine. Through Sept. 30. (CDS Gallery, 13 E. 75th St. Open Mondays.)

Jonathan Silver—A dramatic, expressionistic, and rather literal sculptural mise en scène, including figures made of clay and plaster that are reminiscent of the sculptor George Segal's protagonists, as well as of Gogol's. Through Oct. 7. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St.)

Donald Sultan—Large, elegant jet-black charcoal drawings of orbs—some rounded like eggs, others nippled like lemons—and smaller drawings of roses. All the works are choked by their own facility. Through Oct. 5. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

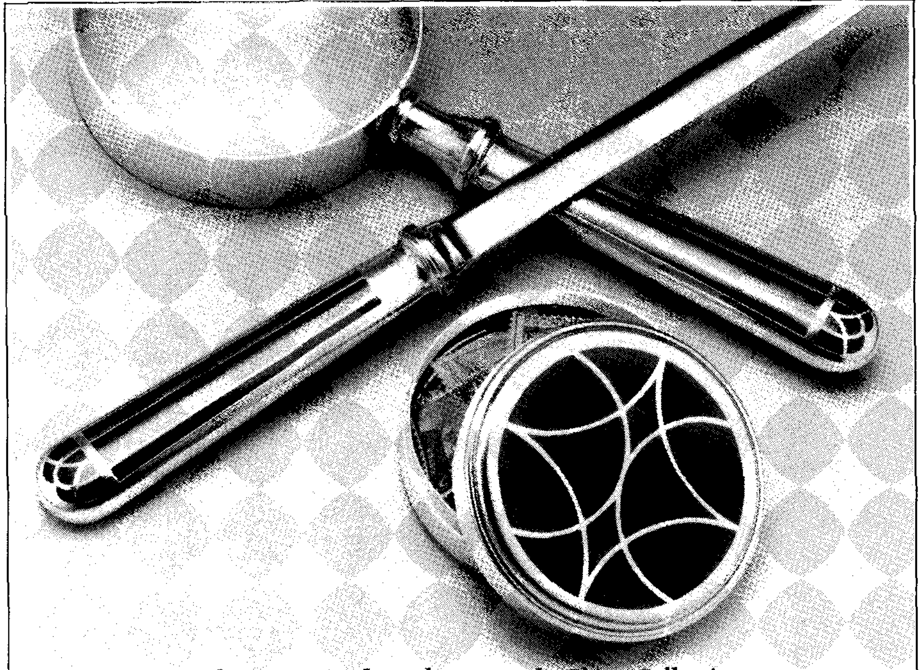
"Lost and Found: The Object Transformed"—A display of delightful small assembled objects, including Donald Lipski's museum of his oddball *objets* in a revolving Timex display case, a Richard Long stone circle, some Gilbert and George postcard collages, a fine John Chamberlain crushed sculpture, and an insipid little machine of two waving butterflies by the usually magnetic Rebecca Horn. Through Oct. 14. (Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

"House of Miracles: Votive Sculpture from Northeastern Brazil"—Brazil produces more votive healing requests than any other nation, and the results are often marvels of universal folk sculpture. This show attempts to simulate the ordered chaos of a votive chapel and contains rows, mounds, cases, and curtains of crudely carved legs, hands, arms, breasts, human figures, cow udders, ears of corn, tractors, and hoes. Most are delightful and a shade spooky. Through Dec. 31. (Americas Society, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St. Opens daily, except Mondays, at noon.)

Short List—yuri kuper, Bernard, 33 E. 74th St. (through Oct. 14); **ethel schwabacher,** Schlesinger, 822 Madison Ave., at 69th St. (through Oct. 7).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Paul Laffoley—These paintings, by a Boston-based artist, look like exalted, cosmic-ideological Parcheesi boards. Looking at them, one feels as if one is doing time with an obsessive perpetual graduate student who has a dissertation to grind. Through Oct. 7. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)


Desk accessories from the Laque de Chine Collection.
Magnifying Glass, $215. Letter Opener, $105. Stamp Box, $125.

Pavillon
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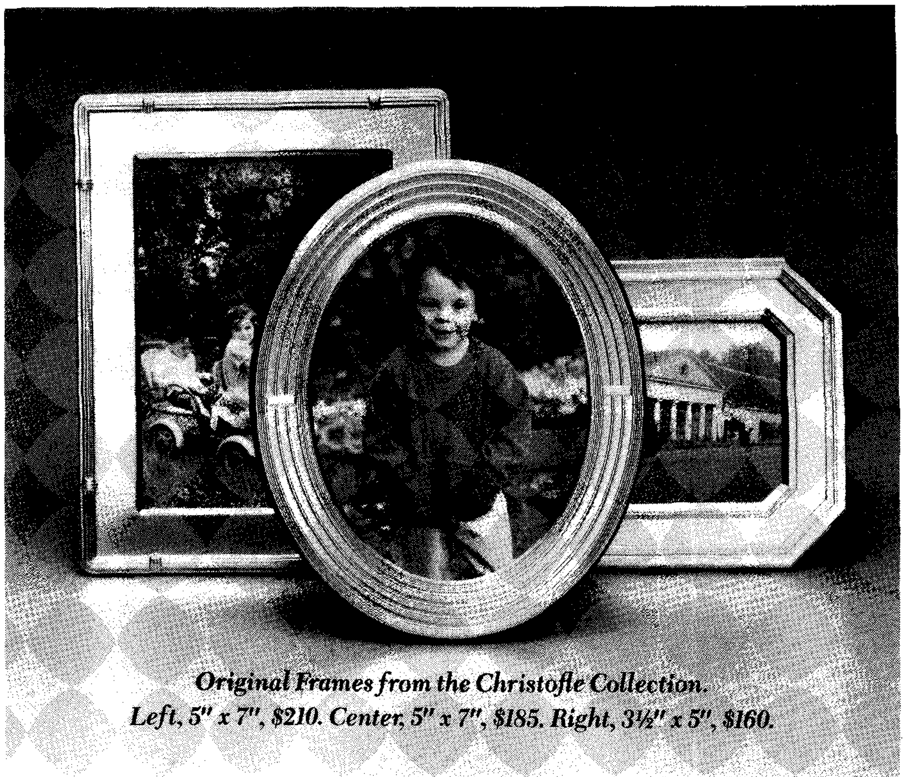
NEW YORK, *680 MADISON AVENUE AT 62ND STREET* • **CHICAGO,** *900 N. MICHIGAN AVENUE*


Original Frames from the Christofle Collection.
Left, 5" x 7", $210. Center, 5" x 7", $185. Right, 3½" x 5", $160.

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BEVERLY HILLS, *9515 BRIGHTON WAY AT RODEO DRIVE* • **DALLAS AT LORETTA BLUM** *4268 OAK LAWN AVENUE*

ART–Cont'd

Robert Mangold—A stunning selection of paintings from the sixties and seventies that reveals the artist's debt to Ellsworth Kelly, as well as Mangold's great skill at making the seemingly rational look princely. Through Oct. 7. (Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Richard Serra—With three new steel prop pieces, the master of monumental moxie displays a much greater diversity of expression than he is usually credited with. One corner piece is a study in balancing extraordinary weight with dynamic flight; another (in its own room) consists of two steel plates and is as soothing as a gentle waterfall; the third, a vertical beam supporting a vast horizontal that runs from wall to wall, brings new meaning to the ancient architectural challenge of the post and lintel. Through Oct. 14. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St. . . . ¶ Castelli, 420 West Broadway, has a show of recent drawings.)

Jacques Villeglé—These collages—covering nearly three decades and made of torn and layered posters gathered from Parisian streets—have a muscular, proto-graffiti appeal, as if they were fragments ripped from construction sites. The work has the structural spine of early modernist collage and a strong dose of sixties street anarchy, not to mention a dash of the playful conceits of the artist's better-known contemporaries Klein, Tinguely, Arman, and Spoerri. Through Oct. 17. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

NO DOUGH

Last spring, glasnost, Aeroflot, and Zaro's Bread Basket joined forces to bring two thousand loaves of Russian black bread to New York every week. American marketers called it "peace bread." Soon other gourmet bread purveyors—Bloomingdale's, Zabar's—followed suit. Thrilled to participate in perestroika, *we went to Zaro's in Grand Central Terminal and handed over five dollars for a loaf. Never had we encountered bread so dark, or quite so heavy. Back at the office, we cut it open and handed out sample slices. "Surprising," said the first taster. "It's kind of sweet and kind of sour. What are those little round seeds, anyway?" As we bit into a slice, we envisioned a reciprocal arrangement: American jets landing weekly in Moscow with cargoes of Wonder Bread. And we pictured the bewildered reactions of the Soviet office workers to the polka-dotted baggies and snowy slices of our childhood. We imagined the first taster saying, "Weird. It stretches." Peace bread didn't actually break either, but we still thought of it as an icebreaker—as another sign of the end of the Cold War and as part of a winter meal, with, say, hot potato soup. But now that the cold's approaching the deal seems to be off. We can't find a crumb of peace bread anywhere. So much for an international loaf exchange.*

"Techno-Metaphysics"—The title of this exhibition of works by five living and disparate Japanese artists means absolutely nothing. Seiko Mikami is twenty-eight years old and is involved with circuitry; Hirotake Kurokawa constructs formalist bronze floor sculptures that suggest shapes found in nature; Ushio Shinohara makes intensely lurid, mannerist appropriations, in various media, of subjects ranging from Chinese dragons to van Gogh's sunflowers; Tadaaki Kuwayama is a cool, minimalist painter; and Takashi Sekiguchi has been photographing quail eggs for fourteen years. Through Sept. 30. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Short List—**FREDERICK BROWN,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 14); **SUE COE,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 4); **JIŘÍ GEORG DOKOUPIL,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 21), and Kasmin, 580 Broadway (through Oct. 21); **SAM FRANCIS,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through Sept. 30); **RAYMOND HAN,** Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 11); **JOE JONES,** Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St. (through Sept. 30); **ROBERT JORDAN,** French, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Sept. 30); **GRÉGOIRE MÜLLER,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 28); **PHILIP WOFFORD,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 14).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Kathe Burkhart—A very funny exhibition of luridly vulgar paintings, in *True Confessions* style, that form a comprehensive public iconology—including the "Ash Wednesday" face-lift and the trysts with Burton—of ol' Violet Eyes herself. In calling the show "Kathe Burkhart by Elizabeth Taylor," the artist efficiently drives home her plausible post-feminist, postmodern, as well as post-structuralist, point. . . . ¶ In the back room, a mini group show, titled "Buttinsky," pitches Tom of Finland against Adrian Piper and Nancy Shaver, among others; it is a zesty volley of pornographic and polemical statements and interventions. Through Sept. 30. (Feature, 484 Broome St.)

Petah Coyne—Six spectacular sculptures—mostly of wire mesh and steel, covered with black sand—hang from the ceiling on vinelike "stems": they are visually alive and foreboding from every angle. Through Oct. 7. (Shainman, 560 Broadway. A complementary installation is in the lobby at the Brooklyn Museum.)

Stephen Ellis—Monochrome fields with streaked, inky lines. Most of these new works are a bit thin, but a creamy yellow painting is refreshingly airy. Through Sept. 30. (Koury Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

Duncan Hannah—New paintings by this sweetly pained pasticheur. The big ones want to take you back to the summer of '42, with a little help from Hopper, Wyeth, André Derain, and Balthus. The small ones ride the well-trod Albert Pinkham Ryder trail, and their formats, subjects, and flat-surfaced frames seem direct ripoffs of Albert York. Through Sept. 30. (Charles Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

David Ireland—Of all today's faux-urban archeologists, Ireland is perhaps the most poetic. His sculptural groups, consisting of troughs, steel tubs, battered metal cabinets, wood scraps, and bare light bulbs—sometimes embedded in concrete plops—have a sense of melancholy, irony, and mannered anarchy. Through Oct 7. (Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway.)

Jeffrey Jenkins—Nasty, extravagantly framed taxidermic abstractions, some made primarily of pelts that have been cropped in such a way as to emphasize anatomical orifices, crevices, and other fetish zones. Here and there other materials suggest little puns on Kiefer, Kounellis, and Ryman. . . . ¶ Also, a boisterous installation by Candy Ass (a.k.a. Cary Leibowitz) made up of comically artless valentines to artists, some good dirty jokes in cartoon form, and assorted paeans to homoeroticism, including lots of varsity pennants that read "Homo State" and "Go Fags!" Through Sept. 30. (Stux, 155 Spring St.)

Ronald Jones / Mike Kelley—At first, this roomful of Brancusi-like sculptures on, appropriately, polished marble and weathered wood bases looks like yet another case of textbook appropriationism, but a consideration of the complicated titles reveals the reverse and, ultimately, a biting critique of mannered aestheticism: the perfect, polished organic forms, which are vintage early modernism, are actually blowups of HIV and HTLV-1, and of some DNA fragments responsible for cancer tumorigenesis. Through Oct. 7. / A smashing set of silk scarves produced at the Fabric Workshop in Philadelphia and reminiscent of medieval flags, but with skulls, three-leaf clovers, a crowned penis, and testicles in odd places, like at the tips of a swastika. Through Oct. 10. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

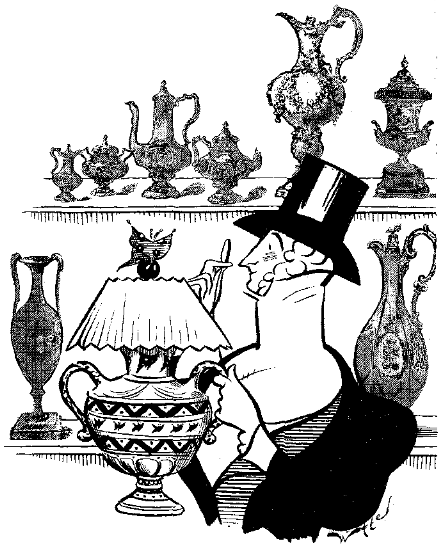
Judy Ledgerwood—Another show of pseudo-sublime paintings of dead, romantic landscapes derived from art history and television. Through Sept. 30. (Scott Hanson, 415 Wes Broadway.)

Sherrie Levine—Theme: Duchamp's "Bachelors Even." Movement: pristine-looking, hand size frosted-glass *objets*, based on the crypti shapes of his "Large Glass" suitors, in prett cherry-wood cases, spotlit. Variation Levine's already familiar paintings resembling chessboards—Duchamp's game—in the rear gallery. This show is the polished fashionable realization of a shrewd, tigh idea. Through Oct. 14. (Boone, 417 Wes Broadway.)

David Ortins—Dull paintings in wax, of stripes Jewish stars, "I"s, balls, and intersecting lines. Through Oct. 14. (Auchincloss, 55 Broadway.)

Scott Richter—Influenced equally by Renaissance torsos and tribal masks, these shield and checkerboards are remarkable for the beauty of their surfaces—especially the pieces involving beeswax or polyester resin—but are not as interestingly funky as the artist's work of a couple of years ago. Through Oct 14. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

Jack Risley / Sylvia Kolbowski—Huge rubber and metal sculptures—resembling monstrous vacuum cleaners preparing to suction the earth of all living matter—are oppressive yet funny. / This glib and unprovocatively self-serving installation consists of framed reviews of a previous installation by the artist and some uninviting stools for contemplation, and makes use of a fireplace with real singed brick innards and a mantel. Through Oct. 14. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)



Aldo Rossi—Rossi's studies of buildings that he has designed with a stripped-down classical vocabulary and of his melancholy, still piazzas evoke his fellow-Italians Morandi and de Chirico and exemplify the best of contemporary architectural drawing. Through Oct. 21. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Ulrich Rückriem—An artist whose monuments of stone are almost always handsome and dispassionate. This installation of square and cubic floor pieces cut from beautiful greenish dolomite is no exception. Through Sept. 30. (Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Frank Schroder—Large, blunt constructions of found-wood planks and hopsacking. The works recall Gordon Matta-Clark's slices of urban abandonment, but without that artist's pathos. Through Oct. 7. (Gibson, 568 Broadway.)

David Smith—This artist has been making paintings—"stochastic simulations"—about the Vietnam War for at least eight years, and suddenly his obsessively repeated patterns evoking camouflage, bomber planes, and military decorations—once so eccentric—don't seem weird at all. There is an overfinished quality to most of this work (which will probably make it attractive to those drawn to commodity-like art) but this is a very interesting first New York solo show. Through Oct. 14. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

Hannah Wilke—Titled "About Face," this trenchant and—as is always the case with this often brilliant and quite relentless artist—very personal exhibition of works in mixed mediums (watercolors, drawings, and photographs) establishes some stunning parallels between natural beauty and the ravages of

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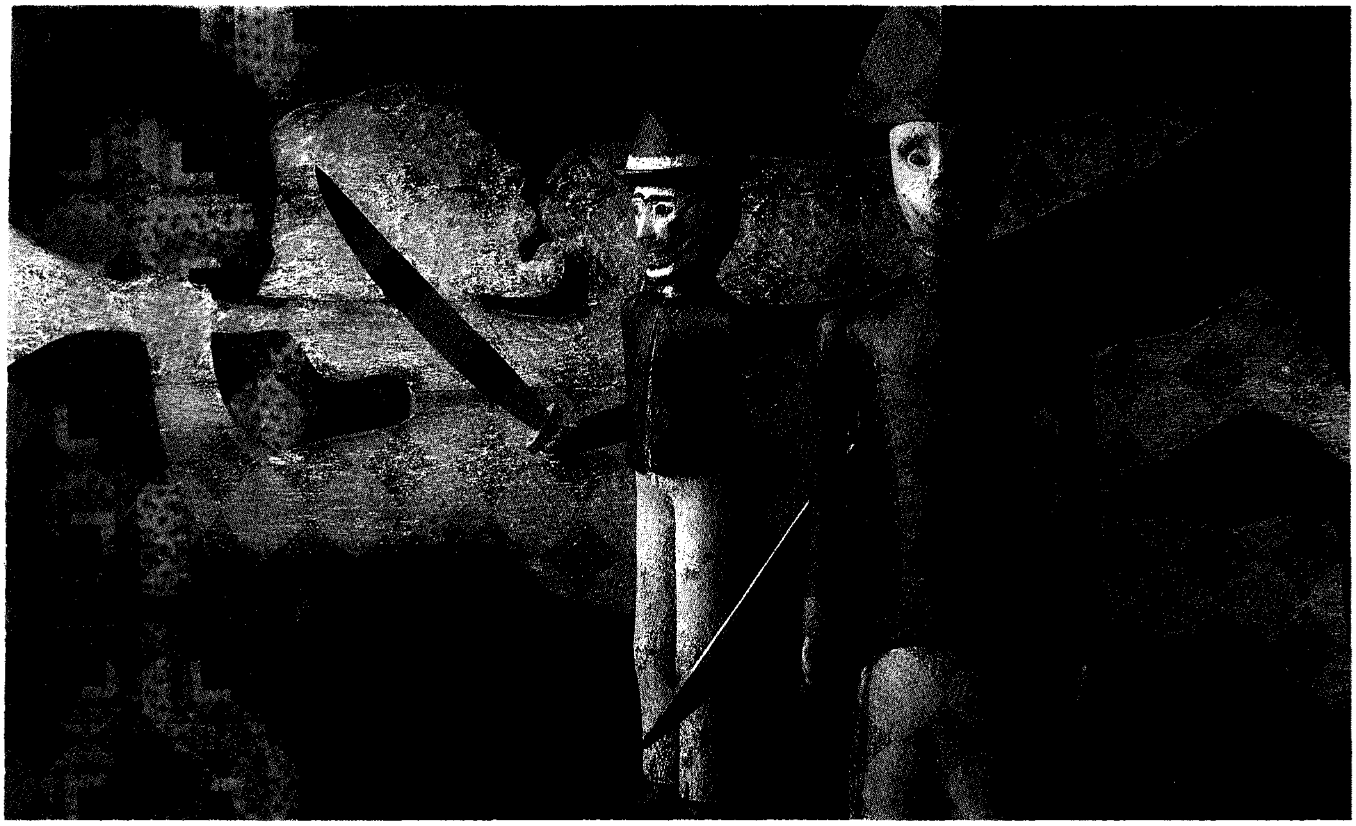

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At the New York Historical Society, New York, New York
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April 15 — Aug. 5, 1990

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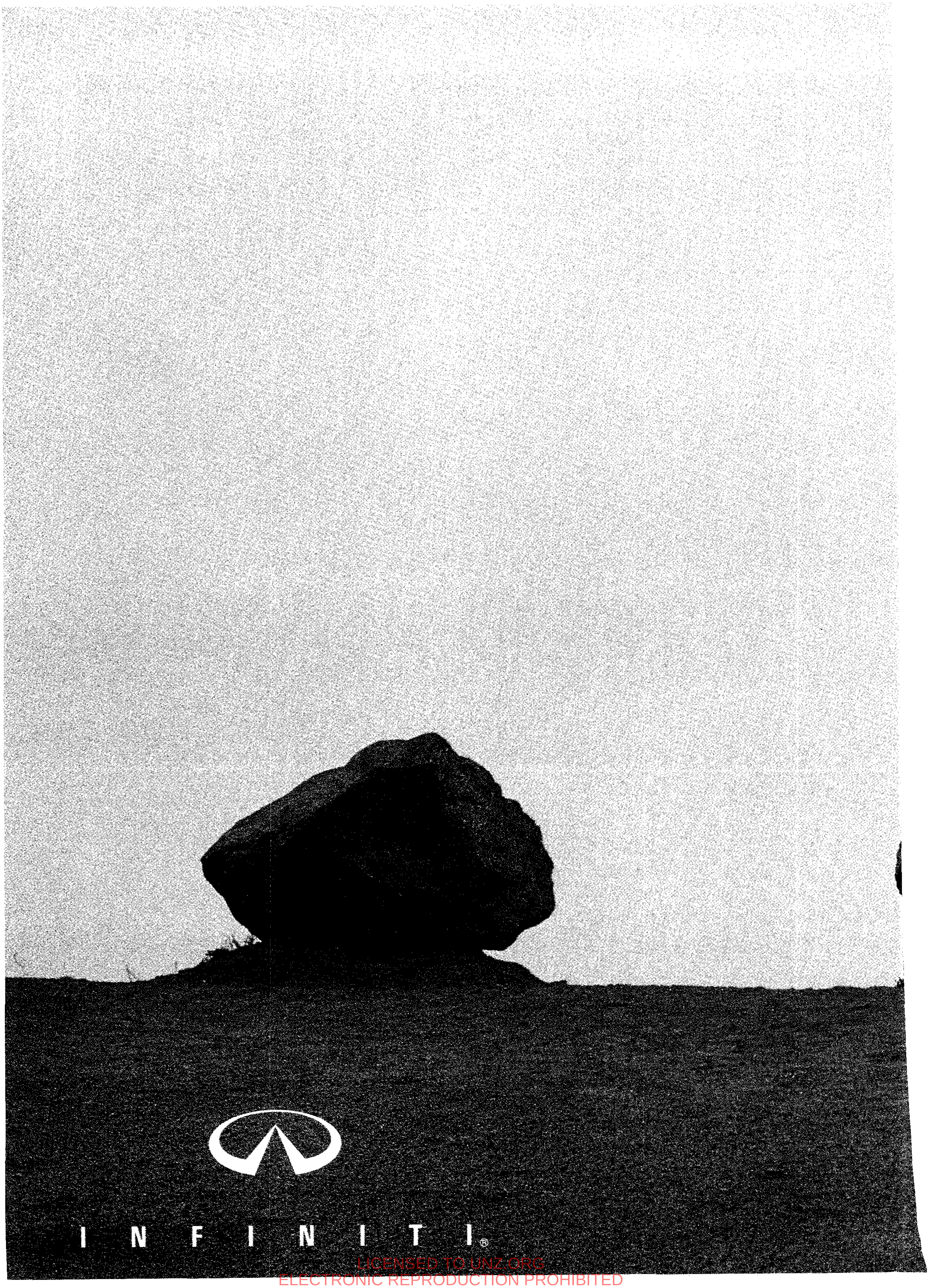
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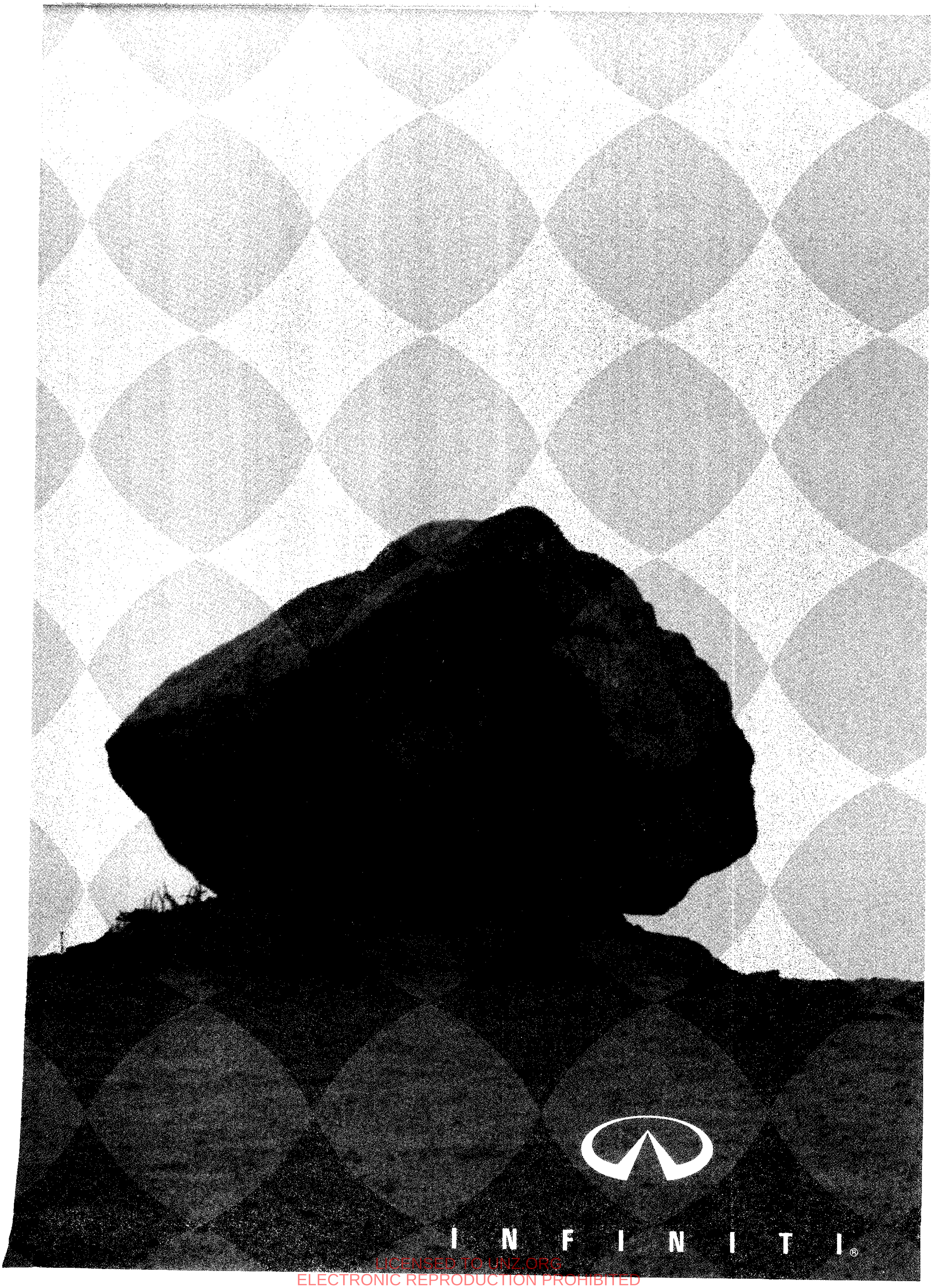
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old age and illness, and between states of innocence and the ever-present possibilities of sexual corruption. Key subjects include Wilke's pet lovebirds, her dying mother, and Wilke herself. Through Oct. 7. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Kes Zapkus / Marco Gastini—Bravura paintings of a jazzy construction with jagged grids and candy colors. / Hyperconscious primitivism in the form of paintings on parchment with bits of worn wood and broken glass. Through Sept. 30. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

"Irwin"—Visually strong, entertaining paintings by a group of artists from Yugoslavia whose specialty is the spoof, the parody, the critique. Targets here include Anselm Kiefer, Victorian art, and American-style ambitiousness (à la Schnabel) in art. Through Sept. 30. (Cutler, 593 Broadway.)

The Tinklers—New, well-constructed faux-naïf paintings on environmental themes by Charles Brohawn and Chris Mason, two multitalented neo-folksters. Through Sept. 30. (Sharpe, 152 Wooster St.)

Group Shows—At **american fine arts,** 40 Wooster St.: Stuccoed dark-brown paintings by John Miller that give form to Freud's contention that the artist reënacts the child's urge to smear his excrement on the wall; some awful large dolls by Gary Mirabelle, including a sweatshirted, balding pig; and a wordwork by Lawrence Weiner that is a meditation on art and ideas. Through Sept. 30. . . . **good,** 532 Broadway: A handsome and upbeat selection of nonrepresentational paintings which includes David Reed's elegant, velvety swirls in the form of a predella panel and Chris Martin's bouncy numbered newspaper sheets in fall-foliage red, Kelly green, and lime. Through Sept. 30. . . . **protetch,** 560 Broadway: Among the several pre-season teasers here are a plastic pool of water by James O. Clark, with an illuminated black disk floating in it, that is enigmatic and oddly reassuring, and a huge new construction by Judy Pfaff—of transparent colored globes, large white steel dots, some French-curve paisleys, and lots of lacy connecting loops—that manages to be both massive and buoyant. Through Oct. 7. . . . **sperone westwater,** 142 Greene St.: This appealing, casual grouping consists of some great early Robert Ryman white paintings—two with residual tape marks where they were attached to the wall, and one with metronomic brushstrokes; some very pretty beeswax paintings of trapped flickering light by Domenico Bianchi; and some oddly glitzy constructions by Richard Tuttle that are crudely painted, involve arcs of bare light bulbs, and are materialistic in a vaporous way. Through Oct. 24.

Short List—**stan brodsky,** Kelly, 591 Broadway (through Sept. 30); **roger brown,** Kind, 136 Greene St. (through Oct. 11); **max coyer,** Katzen-Brown, 475 Broome St. (through Oct. 14), and Schreiber, 171 Spring St. (through Oct. 4); **lydia dona** and **david winter,** Toll, 146 Greene St. (through Oct. 21); **louise fishman,** Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway (through Nov. 4); **rona pondick,** Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through Oct. 28); **jan sawka,** Dorsky, 578 Broadway (through Oct. 28); **carol szymanski,** Loughelton, 67 Prince St. (through Oct. 14); **krzysztof wodiczko,** Exit Art, 578 Broadway (through Oct. 28).

OTHER GALLERIES

Reverend Howard Finster—A retrospective of paintings, sculptures, and photographs by an artist-preacher from Summerville, Georgia, entitled "The Road to Heaven Is Paved by Good Works." Through Jan. 5. (PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St. Mondays through Fridays, 8 to 6.)

Ben Kinmont—This latest dose of nouveau-materialist realism consists of picturesque paintings of smeared shellac, oil, and encaustic, and a Sheetrock construction of a huge, half-enterable box. Through Sept. 30. (Cugliani, 508 Greenwich St., at Spring St.)

Maura Sheehan—Sheehan is practically the only artist keeping installation art alive in the object-obsessed New York gallery scene. Her current environment is a rumination on religion and violence in America called "Drinking, Homicide & Rebellion." The show is spooky and affecting, and includes many black statues of Christian saints wearing sinister masks, and a row of books burned beyond identification. Through Oct. 14. (Watson, 241 Lafayette St.)

Jeff Wall and one of his subjects

PHOTOGRAPHY

Intelligence and an alertness to the interplay between individuals have always ignited Jeff Wall's light-box photography. Five of his recent works can be seen at the Marian Goodman Gallery in a powerful and complex exhibition. Wall's work is such a synthesis of approaches and subjects that it can't be categorized: his photography is political, analytical, cinematic, attuned to art history, and extremely psychological. He's subtle enough and advertisement-slick enough that his work is free of the didacticism that all too often undermines art or photography with a "message." His work also has links to photojournalism, but Wall's a director as well as an observer; his pictures have the spontaneous appearance of snapshots, but they're carefully choreographed. For the images in this exhibition he hired actors who "performed" his photographs.

There's a good deal of enigma in Wall's pictures, to hold the viewer's attention. And because they're blown up as well as lit up, details and colors are vibrant and create a hypnotic effect. He electrifies scenes of ordinary life so that they pop out in luminescent fragments that capture what usually happens too fast or too often to be noticed. The high point in the Goodman exhibition is "Outburst," a back-room scenario that shows Wall at his best. There's a roomful of people working away on sewing machines. In the foreground is a man who looks like the foreman; his dukes are up and aimed at one of the seamstresses. It's hard to know whether his grimace is threatening or teasing—whether the image is about comradeship or anger, or both.

Duane Michals—Illustration, drawing, painting, photography, poetry, and prose have been brought together in this show with lightness and apparent ease. Through Sept. 30. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Walter Rosenblum—Documentary photographs from the Pitt Street Project (late thirties) and from a journey through Haiti (1958). Through Oct. 14. (Photofind, 138 Spring St.)

Aaron Siskind—No one can defend the importance of form in photography better than John Szarkowski, and few photographers can illustrate Szarkowski's words as well as Aaron Siskind. Szarkowski's selection of Siskind's prints from those owned by the Museum of Modern Art is a treat. Even though many of Siskind's photographs on view here could mingle among a very refined gathering of abstract paintings, they don't betray their roots, and never let you forget where they came from—a camera that framed what was already there. Through Oct. 10. (Museum of Modern Art.)

International Center of Photography—"Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America," a show of works by photojournalist Brian Lanker. . . . ¶ Dorit Cypis has assembled an installation, called "The Naked Nude," in which viewers are surrounded by seven slide projectors. Both shows through Oct. 29. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—Three exhibitions of works by individual artists, plus two of works from the I.C.P.'s permanent collection, fill this new space, which has two floors and twelve thousand square feet. Alexander Liberman has photographic portraits of artists (among them Braque, Picasso, and Rouault) in their studios. . . . ¶ Barbara Kasten has Cibachrome prints of architecture. . . . ¶ Photojournalist James Nachtwey, whose assignments have taken him to Nicaragua, the West Bank, Sri Lanka, and other areas of conflict, is showing more than fifty color photographs. Through Nov. 1. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

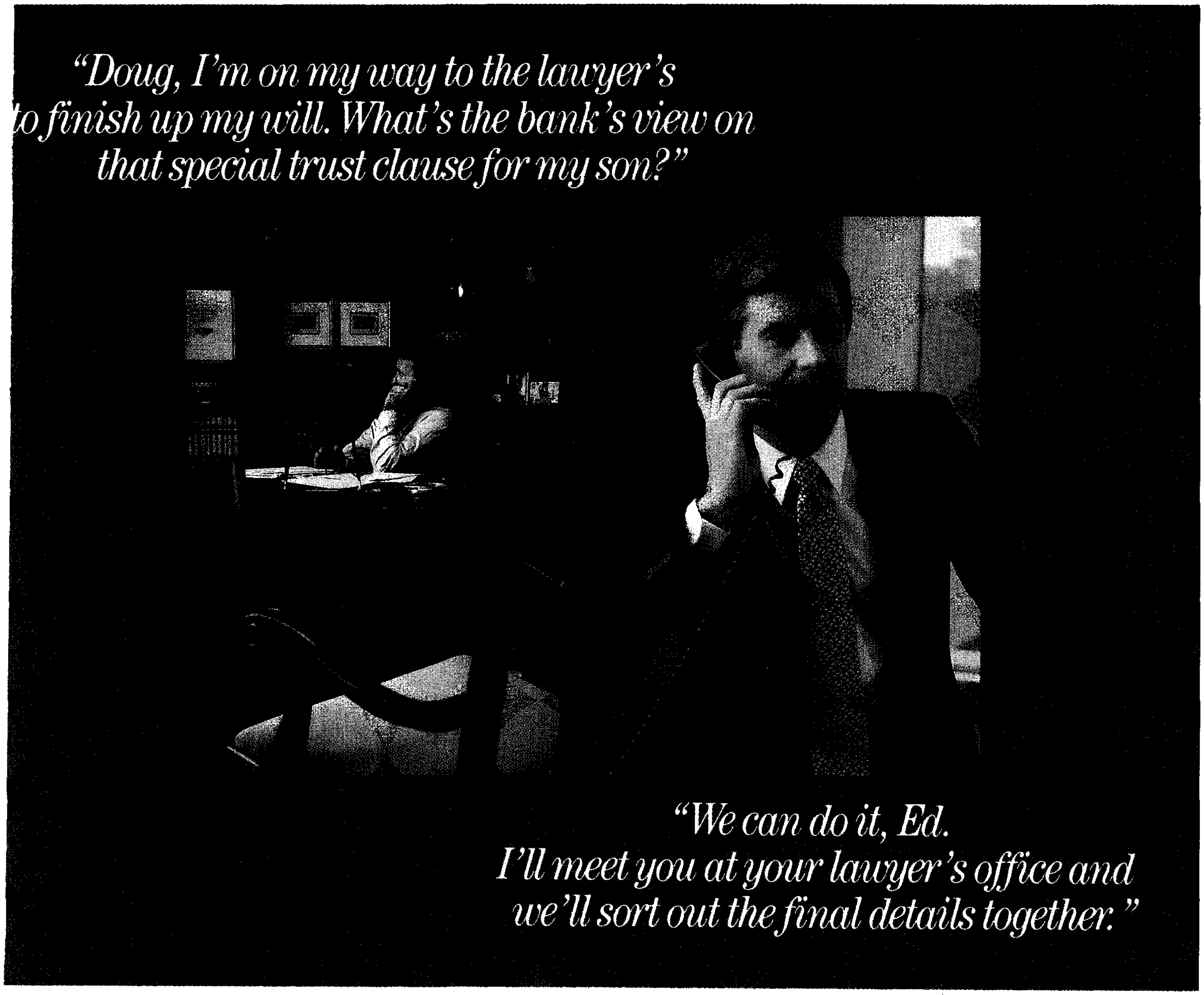
New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"City of Contrasts": In the twenties and thirties, Irving Browning was commissioned to photograph such landmarks as the Chrysler Building, the Waldorf-Astoria, and the Empire State Building. Many of those images are in this show, juxtaposed with post-crash shots of apple venders, and of the numerous Hoovervilles that appeared as the Depression wore on. . . . ¶ A show celebrating the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Louis Daguerre's invention of photography. Among the works are portraits of Washington Irving, Commodore Perry, and Tom Thumb. Through Dec. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

The Donnelley Collection—More than forty contemporary photographs from a collection that includes works by Bruce Nauman, Cindy Sherman, and Richard Prince. Through Oct. 7. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Short List—**lewis baltz,** Lorence-Monk, 568 Broadway, and Castelli, 578 Broadway (through Oct. 14); **stephen brigidi,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through Oct. 21); **pol bury,** Prakapas, 19 E. 71st St. (opens at noon, through Oct. 28); **lynn davis,** Lowinsky, 584 Broadway (through Nov. 4); **macduff everton,** Borden, 560 Broadway (through Oct. 28); **kathy grove** and **carl toth,** Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 14); **andreas gursky,** 303 Gallery, 127 Spring St. (through Oct. 14); **andré kertész,** Twining, 568 Broadway (through Oct. 14); **jaschi klein,** Pfeifer, 568 Broadway (through Oct. 12); **mitchell syrop,** Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Oct. 7); **jeff wall,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Oct. 7); **boyd webb,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 14).

MANUFACTURERS HANOVER

Responsive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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

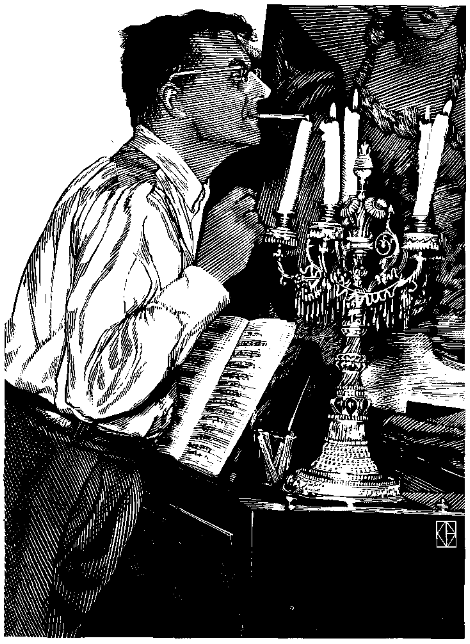
MUSIC

IN 1922, the New York press first took note of a "Russian Girl" (she was seventeen) who had recently arrived in New York to seek her fortune as a pianist. From the public-relations standpoint, two things were of special interest: she and her family were refugees from postrevolutionary deprivation and hardship, in Vilna, and at her New York début she chose to play Paderewski's "Polish Fantasy" with the great man himself in the audience.

But public relations, useful as it is for starting things up, could not in those days form the basis of a career in classical music. Nadia Reisenberg's long and productive American career was founded on solid merits, and unflashy ones (though critics always agreed that her technique was in the virtuoso class), and she attracted the interest not only of Paderewski but also of the pianist Josef Hofmann and of several important conductors. In the nineteen-twenties, she married a businessman, Isaac J. Sherman, and soon settled into a pattern of occasional solo recitals (well received but not treated as major events), chamber-music collaborations and orchestral appearances (also well received, and often associated with the presentation of unfamiliar works), recordings (her Westminster albums are fondly regarded by some pianophiles)—and teaching, for which she has probably been remembered most gratefully since her death, in 1983. She taught at Juilliard, Mannes, and Queens College. One of her students was Richard Goode. Another was Myung-Whun Chung, the young conductor recently named to head Paris's new Opéra-Bastille. Still another was her son Robert Sherman, who sometimes played duos with her in public but never pursued a pianistic career; now he is well known as the executive producer of WQXR. Mr. Sherman will be the host when Mr. Goode and several other students and colleagues (including Earl Carlyss and Rudolf Firkušný) gather at Merkin Concert Hall on September 28 for a program called "Nadia Reisenberg—A Joyful Remembrance."

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—Opening performances of the season, which will run through May 6. **AIDA,** with Aprile Millo, Dolora Zajick, Placido Domingo, and Sherrill Milnes; James Levine conducting. (Sept. 25 at 7, a benefit, and Sept. 28 and Oct. 2 at 8.) . . . **IL TRITTICO,** consisting of three short operas—"Il Tabarro," with Teresa Stratas, Mignon Dunn, Giorgio Merighi, and Juan Pons; "Suor Angelica," with Teresa Stratas, Florence Quivar, Joyce Guyer, and Ariel Bybee; and "Gianni Schicchi," with Teresa Stratas, Mignon Dunn, Bruno Pola, and Vinson Cole. Conducted by James Levine. (Sept. 26 and Sept. 29 at 8.) . . . **PORGY AND BESS,** with Priscilla Baskerville, Marvis Martin, Camellia Johnson, Michael Smartt, and Ben Holt; James Levine. (Sept. 27 at 8.) . . . With the same cast, but conducted by Robert Duerr. (Sept. 30 and Oct. 3 at 8.) . . . **LA BOHÈME,** with Fiamma Izzo D'Amico and Richard Leech; James Levine. (Sept. 30 at 1:30 and Oct. 4 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)



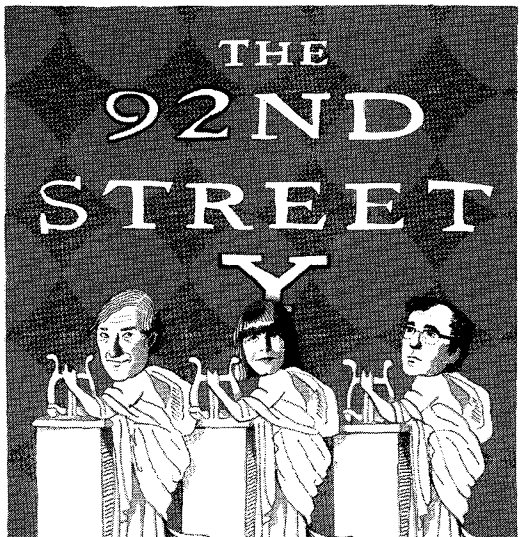
Dmitri Shostakovich

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—The opera's orchestra is on strike. The following performances had been scheduled to take place: **MADAME BUTTERFLY** (Sept. 26 and Oct. 5 at 8.) . . . **RIGOLETTO** (Sept. 27 at 8.) . . . **MEFISTOFELE** (Sept. 28 at 8.) . . . **IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA** (Sept. 30 at 2.) . . . **DIE TOTE STADT** (Sept. 30 and Oct. 4 at 8.) . . . **DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE** (Oct. 1 at 1.) . . . **LA BOHÈME** (Oct. 1 at 7.) . . . **THE MIKADO** (Oct. 3 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. For updated information about performances and the exchange or refund of tickets, call 870-5570.)

ORCHESTRAS

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Zubin Mehta conducting. Sept. 26 at 7:30: A Beethoven-Mahler program, with Murray Perahia, piano. . . . ¶ Sept. 27-28 at 8 and Sept. 29 at 2: A program of works by Mozart, Wagner, and Beethoven. With Mr. Perahia and the Westminster Symphonic Choir, directed by Joseph Flummerfelt. . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 7:30: A performance of Mozart's Symphony No. 40 and Mahler's Fifth Symphony. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424.)

MANHATTAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA—Richard Auldon Clark conducting a program of works by Ravel, Wagner, and Dvořák. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Sept. 28 at 8.)



Julian Barnes, Margaret Drabble, and Harold Pinter at the 92nd Street Y

JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA—Otto-Werner Muelle conducting. With Allison Eldredge, cello (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Oct. 4 at 8.)

MANNES ORCHESTRA—Michael Charry conducting works by Beethoven, Berlioz, and Debussy. (Symphony Space, Broadway a 95th St. 864-5400. Oct. 5 at 8.)

RECITALS

NADIA REISENBERG TRIBUTE—Performances by the late pianist's students and colleagues including Earl Carlyss, violin; David Glazer clarinet; Joel Krosnick, cello; and Rudol Firkušný and Richard Goode, piano. The program will include works by Mendelssohn and Dvořák. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W 67th St. 362-8719. Sept. 28 at 8.)

NEW YORK CHAMBER ENSEMBLE—Playing works by Schubert, Erwin Lendvai, and Jacques Ibert. (Florence Gould Hall, French Institute–Alliance Française, 55 E. 59th St 355-6160. Sept. 29 at 8.)

TRULS OTTERBECH MØRK—Cello. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 30 at 8:30.)

SI YO MUSIC SOCIETY—Chamber music. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Oct. 1 at 3.)

MUSICA VIVA—Playing new works by Daniel Pinkham and Raoul Pleskow. (Church of All Souls, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. Oct. 1 at 4. No tickets necessary.)

LONDON BAROQUE—Performing in a program of works by Vivaldi, Handel, Corelli, and Bach. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Oct. 1 at 5.)

NORTH/SOUTH CONSONANCE—Max Lifchitz conducting premières by Irwin Bazelon, Daniel Kessner, Reza Vali, and Bruce Taub. With Neva Pilgrim, soprano. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Oct. 2 at 8.)

SHOSTAKOVICH STRING QUARTETS—The second in a series of four concerts by the Manhattan String Quartet. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 2 at 8.)

EUGENIA ZUKERMAN AND ANTHONY NEWMAN—Flute and harpsichord, in a program of works by Bach, Jan Sweelinck, and Henry Purcell. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. Oct. 4 at 6. For information about tickets, call 930-0855.)

DAVID STAROBIN—Classical guitarist. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Oct. 4 at 8.)

BOSTON CAMERATA—Joel Cohen conducting an original-instruments concert called "Musicque de Joye." With the Boston Shawm and Sackbut Ensemble. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Oct. 5 at 8.)

BENEFIT CONCERT—Isaac Stern, violin, and Vladimir Feltsman, piano, in a performance to support the resettlement of Soviet Jews. Also appearing will be Elie Wiesel, Alvin Ailey, and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. Sept. 28 at 8. For tickets, call 415-5640.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK / PERSONAL APPEARANCES

STÉPHANE GRAPPELLI—The world's best-known jazz violinist is still sweet and sassy at 81, and he's joined in this concert by the not strictly classical cellist Yo-Yo Ma, and by the silver-toned pianist-composer Roger Kellaway. Also present will be David Grisman and his quartet. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 4 at 8.)

BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE—In the late seventies, Mick Jones and Joe Strummer, co-captains of the Clash, wrote some of the angriest rock and roll ever heard—songs such as "White Riot," "I'm So Bored with the U.S.A.," and "Safe European Home" became the battle cry of a generation on the dole in England. But by the early eighties the Clash had lost most of its power and urgency and, in the midst of a music scene dominated by fashionable gloom-and-doom bands like Depeche Mode, called it quits. In 1985, Jones formed B.A.D., a beatbox band with its ear to the street. The group's sound, a melting pot of rock, rap, and reggae, is exuberant dance music for and about "the people"—a hip-hopping night at the union hall. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 947-5850. Oct. 4-5 at 8.)

ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Sept. 27-30 at 8.

Magmouat Hakmoun—Music and dance from Morocco in the Gnawa style. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Sept. 30 at 8.)

The Pogues—With Phranc. (Beacon Theatre. Oct. 1 at 8.)

George Burns and Bob Hope—With Dionne Warwick. (Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Oct. 1 at 7.)

Joe Cocker—With Cindy Bullens. (Beacon Theatre. Oct. 3 at 8.)

Criterion Center Cabaret—Sept. 26-Oct. 1: Leslie Uggams. . . . ¶ Oct. 3-15: "3-Girls-3," starring Helen O'Connell, Kay Starr, and Margaret Whiting. (Criterion Center Cabaret, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200. Evening performances Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8, and Fridays and Saturdays at 8 and 10. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the Philadelphia Phillies, Sept. 25-27 at 7:35.

Yankees—Vs. the Detroit Tigers, Sept. 29-30 at 7:30, and Oct. 1 at 1:30.

Playoffs—With the end of the regular season upon us, fans in certain other cities will be happy to know that the playoffs begin Oct. 3 and 4.

Jets—Vs. the Indianapolis Colts, Oct. 1 at 1. (Home base for the Mets is Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; and for the Yankees, Yankee Stadium, 293-6000. The Jets play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands; for information about tickets, call 421-6600.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. Both the Cowdin and the Matron are on Sept. 30. Through Oct. 16. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . **Trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

International Antique Dealers Show—The British collectors Brian and Anna Haughton have organized this as an "international" show, even though, in this first year, exhibitors come mainly from the United States and Britain. Highlights will be art and artifacts from ancient China: a collection of snuff bottles, gilt weapons, and several bronze vessels from the Warring States/Han period. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Sept. 25-27, from 11 to 8.)

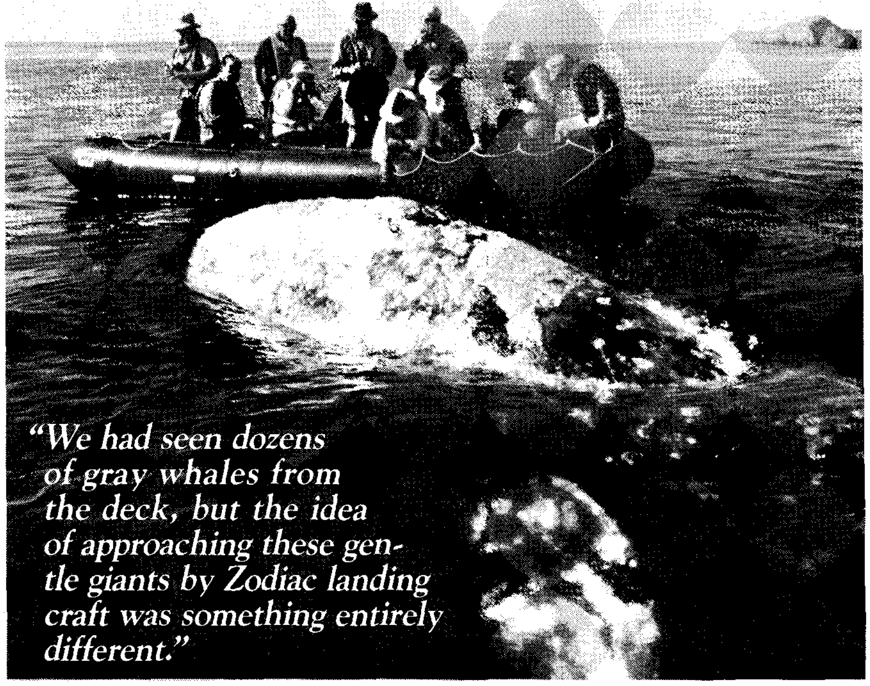
Readings—Sept. 29 at 8:30: Trey Ellis, Cynthia Kadohata, and Michael Ryan read from recent work. (West Side Y, 5 W. 63rd St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 8: Margaret Drabble and Julian Barnes read from new work. . . . Oct. 3 at 8: Harold Pinter reads from his play "One for the Road." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.)

Talks—Leo Castelli talks about the art world. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. Oct. 2 at 6. For information about tickets, call 930-0855.) . . . ¶ Seven Chinese writers and critics talk about the fate of the arts in China since Tiananmen. Larry McMurtry will introduce the discussion. (The Columns, 584 Broadway, between Prince and Houston Sts. Oct. 3 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Rolling Stone Photos—A retrospective of some of the famous mugs that have appeared in the pages of *Rolling Stone*, including the one-namers (Prince, Bono, Sting, Madonna), the Michaels (Tyson, Jackson, J. Fox, George), the Richards (Keith and Little), and the pairs (John & Yoko, John & Julian, Penn & Teller, Liberace & his chauffeur). (Loeb Student Center Auditorium, New York University, Washington Sq. and LaGuardia Pl. Oct. 3-4, from 9 to 5. No tickets necessary.)

Numbers—If you were the type of adolescent who prayed that the "surprise" section on the S.A.T.s would be reading comprehension, you might want to wander over to Cooper Union for a look at this friendly exhibition, which starts Oct. 4 and is designed to help relieve math anxiety. Through art and interactive displays, the exhibit teaches about infinity, fractals, Gödel's Theorem, and more. (Houghton Gallery, Cooper Union, 7 E. 7th St. Mondays through Fridays, noon to 7, and Saturdays, noon to 5. Through Oct. 26.)

SPECIAL EXPEDITIONS AND THE SEA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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 28.

EAST SIDE

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Sept. 26-28: "Intermezzo" (1936, directed by Gustaf Molander; in Swedish), with Ingrid Bergman; and "Swedenhielms" (1935, Molander; in Swedish), with Bergman.
Sept. 29-Oct. 1: "June Night" (1940, Per Lindberg; in Swedish), with Bergman and Gunnar Sjöberg; and "Dollar" (1938, Molander; in Swedish), with Bergman.
From Oct. 3: "Dollar"; and "The Count of the Old Town" (1934, Sigurd Wallén and Edvin Adolphson; in Swedish), with Bergman.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Penn & Teller Get Killed" (†).
Theatre 2: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas.
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 28: "Batman" (†). From Sept. 29: "Johnny Handsome" (Walter Hill), with Mickey Rourke.

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 13th and 14th. (505-7320)
"Sea of Love" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Dead Poets Society" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Sea of Love" (†).

Murray Hill, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
"Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).
Theatre 2: "Shirley Valentine" (†).
Theatre 3: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
Through Sept. 28: "Parenthood" (†).
From Sept. 29: "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Sept. 28: "Cookie" (†).
From Sept. 29: "On the Make."

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Penn & Teller Get Killed" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"The Abyss" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 28: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy. From Sept. 29: "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson.
Theatre 2: "Casualties of War" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"The Big Picture" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Parenthood" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sea of Love" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "In Country" (Norman Jewison), with Bruce Willis and Emily Lloyd.
Theatre 2: "Heavy Petting" (Obie Benz).
Theatre 3: "Batman" (†).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 28: "The Heart of Dixie" (Martin Davidson). From Sept. 29: "War Party" (Franc Roddam), with Billy Wirth and Kevin Dillon.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 28: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†). From Sept. 29: "Johnny Handsome" (Walter Hill), with Mickey Rourke.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"When Harry Met Sally . . . " (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas.
Theatre 2: "A Dry White Season" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Queen of Hearts" (Jon Amiel).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Shirley Valentine" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (369-1677)
Theatre 1: From Sept. 29: "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson.
Theatre 2: From Sept. 29: "Romero" (John Duigan), with Raul Julia.

At the Biograph Cinema,
Elizabeth Taylor in "Butterfield 8"

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 28: "The Package" (Andrew Davis), with Gene Hackman. From Sept. 29: "Johnny Handsome" (Walter Hill), with Mickey Rourke.
Theatre 2: "Sea of Love" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 28: "Kickboxer" (Mark DiSalle and David Worth). From Sept. 29: "War Party" (Franc Roddam), with Billy Wirth and Kevin Dillon.
Theatre 2: "Parenthood" (†).

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura.
Theatre 2: "Chocolat" (†).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "When Harry Met Sally . . . " (†).
Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through Sept. 28: "The Abyss" (†).
From Sept. 29: "War Party" (directed by Franc Roddam), with Billy Wirth and Kevin Dillon.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 28: "Parenthood" (†). From Sept. 29: "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson.
Theatre 2: "Sea of Love" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "The Second Animation Celebration: The Movie," twenty-four short films from six countries.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 28: "Spices" (Ketan Mehta; in Hindi). From Sept. 29: "The Girl on a Swing" (Gordon Hessler), with Meg Tilly and Rupert Frazer.
Theatre 3: "Heavy Petting" (Obie Benz).
Theatre 4: "Distant Voices, Still Lives" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Cookie" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 28: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†). From Sept. 29: "In Country" (Norman Jewison), with Bruce Willis and Emily Lloyd.
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 28: "The Abyss" (†). From Sept. 29: "Johnny Handsome" (Walter Hill), with Mickey Rourke.
Theatre 4: "Parenthood" (†).
Theatre 5: "When Harry Met Sally . . . " (†).
Theatre 6: "Sea of Love" (†).
Theatre 7: Through Sept. 28: "Sea of Love" (†). From Sept. 29 (tentative): "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson.
Theatre 8: "A Dry White Season" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0600)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 28: "Do the Right Thing" (†). From Sept. 29: "War Party" (Franc Roddam), with Billy Wirth and Kevin Dillon.
Theatre 2: "Casualties of War" (†).
Theatre 3: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy and Amy Madigan.

Worldwide Cinemas, 49th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 28: "When Harry Met Sally . . . " (†). From Sept. 29: "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 28: "Do the Right Thing" (†). From Sept. 29: "On the Make."
Theatre 3: "Parenthood" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Abyss" (†).
Theatre 5: "Casualties of War" (†).
Theatre 6: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy and Amy Madigan.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Dead Poets Society" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Sea of Love" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"The Dybbuk" (1938, Michal Waszynski; in Yiddish).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
Through Sept. 30: "Time Guardian."
From Oct. 1: "Thelonious Monk: Straight, No Chaser" (Charlotte Zwerin).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Romero" (John Duigan), with Raul Julia.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Weapons of the Spirit" (Pierre Sauvage), a documentary.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Tom Jones" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
(Matinées only) "The Adventures of Milo and Otis" (Masanori Hata); and (evenings only) "Do the Right Thing" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Shirley Valentine" (†).

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "High Fidelity—The Adventures of the Guarneri String Quartet" (Allan Miller), a documentary.
Theatre 2: "The Little Thief" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Music Teacher" (Gérard Corbiau; in French).

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).
Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"When Harry Met Sally . . . " (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "A Dry White Season" (†).

Theatre 2: "Penn & Teller Get Killed" (†).

Theatre 3: "Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas.

Theatre 4: "The Package" (Andrew Davis), with Gene Hackman.

Theatre 5: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

Theatre 6: Through Sept. 28: "Black Rain." From Sept. 29: "Johnny Handsome" (Walter Hill), with Mickey Rourke.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "Parenthood" (†).

Theatre 2: "Sea of Love" (†).

Columbia Cinema, B'way at 103rd. (316-6600)

Through Sept. 28: "Dead Poets Society" (†).

From Sept. 29 (tentative): "Batman" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 28: "Kickboxer" (Mark DiSalle and David Worth). From Sept. 29: "War Party" (Franc Roddam), with Billy Wirth and Kevin Dillon.

Theatre 2: Through Sept. 28: "Casualties of War" (†). From Sept. 29: "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Sept. 28: "Night Game" (directed by Peter Masterson), with Roy Scheider. From Sept. 29: "Johnny Handsome" (Walter Hill), with Mickey Rourke.

Theatre 3: "Kickboxer" (Mark DiSalle and David Worth).

Theatre 4: Through Sept. 28: "Hell High." From Sept. 29: "War Party" (Franc Roddam), with Billy Wirth and Kevin Dillon.

Theatre 5: "Lock Up" (John Flynn), with Sylvester Stallone and Donald Sutherland.

Theatre 6: Through Sept. 28: "Time Trackers." From Sept. 29: "On the Make."

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"The Package" (Andrew Davis), with Gene Hackman.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 2: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†); and "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier" (William Shatner), with Shatner and Leonard Nimoy.

Theatre 3: "Turner & Hooch" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Tom Hanks; and "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (†).

Theatre 4: "The Heart of Dixie" (Martin Davidson), with Ally Sheedy.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"Black Rain" (Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Parenthood" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Sept. 28: "Casualties of War" (†). From Sept. 29: "Welcome Home" (Franklin J. Schaffner), with Kris Kristofferson.

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)

"Relentless" (William Lustig), with Judd Nelson, Robert Loggia, and Leo Rossi.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Sept. 25: "The Band Wagon" (1953, directed by Vincente Minnelli), with Fred Astaire, Cyd Charisse, and Nanette Fabray; and "It's Always Fair Weather" (1955, Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen), with Kelly, Dan Dailey, and Charisse.

Sept. 26-27: "The Clock" (1945, Vincente Minnelli), with Judy Garland and Robert Walker; and "Weekend at the Waldorf" (1945, Robert Z. Leonard), with Ginger Rogers, Walter Pidgeon, Lana Turner, and Van Johnson.

Sept. 28: "Blackboard Jungle" (1955, Richard Brooks), with Glenn Ford, Anne Francis, Louis Calhern, and Sidney Poitier; and "Edge of the City" (1957, Martin Ritt), with John Cassavetes, Poitier, Jack Warden, and Ruby Dee.

Sept. 29-30: "Broadway Melody of 1938" (1937, Roy Del Ruth), with Eleanor Powell, Robert Taylor, and Buddy Ebsen; and "Dames" (1934, Ray Enright), with Dick Powell, Ruby Keeler, Hugh Herbert, Guy Kibbee, Joan Blondell, and ZaSu Pitts.

Oct. 1-2: "Butterfield 8" (1960, Daniel Mann), with Elizabeth Taylor, Laurence Harvey, Eddie Fisher, and Dina Merrill; and "I'll Cry Tomorrow" (1956, Mann), with Susan Hayward, Richard Conte, and Eddie Albert.

Oct. 3-4: "Three Daring Daughters" (1948, Fred M. Wilcox), with Jeanette MacDonald, José Iturbi, and Jane Powell; and "It Happened in Brooklyn" (1947, Richard Whorf), with Frank Sinatra, Kathryn Grayson, and Peter Lawford.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Sept. 26: "Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid" (1973, Sam Peckinpah), with James Coburn and Kris Kristofferson; and "Once Upon a Time in the West" (1969, Sergio Leone), with Henry Fonda, Claudia Cardinale, and Jason Robards.

Sept. 27-28: "Working Girl" (1988, Mike Nichols), with Harrison Ford, Sigourney Weaver, and Melanie Griffith; and "Nine to Five" (1980, Colin Higgins), with Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin, and Dolly Parton.

Sept. 29-30: "Koyaanisqatsi" (1983, Godfrey Reggio); and "Metropolis" (1926, Fritz Lang; silent), with Brigitte Helm.

Oct. 1: "Der Rosenkavalier" (1963, Paul Czinner), a Salzburg Festival performance, with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Anneliese Rothenberger.

Oct. 2-3: "Miss Firecracker" (1989, Thomas Schlamme), with Holly Hunter, Mary Steenburgen, and Tim Robbins; and "Raising Arizona" (1987, Joel Coen), with Nicolas Cage and Hunter.

From Oct. 4: "Some Like It Hot" (†); and "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" (1953, Howard Hawks), with Jane Russell and Marilyn Monroe.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

Through Sept. 26: "Rogue Cop" (1954, Roy Rowland), with Robert Taylor, and Janet Leigh; "Impact" (1949, Arthur Lubin), with Brian Donlevy and Ella Raines; and "Scarlet Street" (1946, Fritz Lang), with Joan Bennett, Edward G. Robinson, and Dan Duryea.

Sept. 27-28: "The Manchurian Candidate" (1962, John Frankenheimer), with Frank Sinatra, Laurence Harvey, Janet Leigh, Angela Lansbury, James Gregory, and Henry Silva; and "Seconds" (1966, Frankenheimer), with Rock Hudson, Salome Jens, and John Randolph.

Sept. 29-30: "The Naked Kiss" (1965, Samuel Fuller), with Constance Towers; and "Shock Corridor" (1963, Fuller), with Towers, Peter Breck, and James Best.

Oct. 1: "Swept Away" (1975, Lina Wertmüller; in Italian), with Giancarlo Giannini; and "Sotto, Sotto" (1985, Wertmüller; in Italian).

Oct. 2-3: "Atlantic City" (1981, Louis Malle), with Burt Lancaster, Susan Sarandon, and Kate Reid; "Nobody Lives Forever" (1946, Jean Negulesco), with John Garfield, Geraldine Fitzgerald, and Walter Brennan; and "Kansas City Confidential" (1952, Phil Karlson), with John Payne, Coleen Gray, and Preston Foster.

From Oct. 4: "The Pearl" (1948, Emillo Fernandez), with Maria Elena Marques and Pedro Armendariz; "Nazarin" (1958, Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Francisco Rabal; and "Simon of the Desert" (†).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Sept. 25: "Le Jour se Lève" ("Daybreak"; 1939, Marcel Carné; in French), with Jean Gabin, Jules Berry, and Arletty; and "Bizarre, Bizarre" (1937, Carné; in French), with Louis Jouvet and Françoise Rosay.

Sept. 26: "And Then There Were None" (1945, René Clair), with Barry Fitzgerald, Walter Huston, and Louis Hayward; and "Dead of Night" (1945), a five-part English film about the supernatural.

Sept. 27: "The Threepenny Opera" (1931, G. W. Pabst; in German), with Lotte Lenya; and "The Blue Angel" (1929, Josef von Sternberg; in German), with Marlene Dietrich, Emil Jannings, and Hans Albers.

Sept. 28: "This Gun for Hire" (1942, Frank Tuttle), with Veronica Lake, Alan Ladd, and Laird Cregar; and "The Glass Key" (1942, Stuart Heisler), with Brian Donlevy, Lake, and Ladd.

Sept. 29-30: "Suddenly, Last Summer" (1959, Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Elizabeth Taylor, Montgomery Clift, and Katharine Hepburn; and "Holiday" (1938, George Cukor), with Hepburn, Cary Grant, Lew Ayres, and Edward Everett Horton.

Oct. 1: "The Picture of Dorian Gray" (1945, Albert Lewin), with Hurd Hatfield, George Sanders, and Angela Lansbury; and "The Fan" (1949, Otto Preminger), with Madeleine Carroll, George Sanders, and Jeanne Crain.

Oct. 2: "L'Avventura" (1959, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti, Gabriele Ferzetti, and Léa Massari; and "L'Amore" (1948, Robert Rossellini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani.

Oct. 3: "Three Strangers" (1946, Jean Negulesco), with Geraldine Fitzgerald, Peter Lorre, and Sydney Greenstreet; and "The Mask of Dimitrios" (1944, Negulesco), with Zachary Scott, Lorre, Faye Emerson, and Greenstreet.

Oct. 4: "Tarnished Lady" (1931, George Cukor), with Tallulah Bankhead and Clive Brook; and "A Royal Scandal" (1945, Otto Preminger), with Bankhead, Charles Coburn, Anne Baxter, William Eythe, Vincent Price, and Sig Rumann.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)

THEATRE 1: Sept. 28 at 2: "Spartacus" (1960, directed by Stanley Kubrick), with Laurence Olivier, Kirk Douglas, and Jean Simmons. . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 6: "Rebecca" (1940, Alfred Hitchcock), with Olivier, Joan Fontaine, and Judith Anderson. . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 2:30: "Henry V" (1944, Olivier), with Olivier, Robert Newton, and Renee Asherson. . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 6: "Spartacus." . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 2: "Rebecca." . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 5: "Henry V." . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 2:30: "The General" (1927, Buster Keaton and Clyde Bruckman; silent), with Keaton and Marion Mack. . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 6: "It Happened One Night" (1934, Frank Capra), with Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert.

THEATRE 2: Sept. 28 at 3: "Point of Order" (1963, Emile de Antonio), a documentary. . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 6: "Rush to Judgment" (1967, de Antonio), a documentary. . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 3: "In the Year of the Pig" (1969, de Antonio), a documentary. . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 6: "Point of Order." . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 2: "Millhouse: A White Comedy" (1971, de Antonio), a documentary. . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 5: "Painters Painting" (1972, de Antonio), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 2: "In the Year of the Pig." . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 5: "Underground" (1976, de Antonio, Mary Lampson, and Haskell Wexler), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 3: "In the King of Prussia" (1983, de Antonio), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 6: "Mr. Hoover and I" (1989, de Antonio), a documentary. Mr. de Antonio will be present.

New York Film Festival—An eighteen-day series of international films at Alice Tully Hall—Sept. 25 at 6:15: "Ariel" (Aki Kaurismaki, Finland). . . . ¶ Sept. 25 at 9:15 and Sept. 26 at 6:15: "A Tale of the Wind" (Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan, France). . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 9 and Sept. 27 at 6:15: "Black Rain" (Shohei Imamura, Japan). . . . ¶ Sept. 27 at 9:30 and Sept. 28 at 6:15: "Roger and Me" (Michael Moore, United States). . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 9: "The Mahabharata" (Peter Brook, France/Great Britain/United States). . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 6:15: "Mystery Train" (Jim Jarmusch, United States). . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 9:15: "Speaking Parts" (Atom Egoyan, Canada). . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 11:30: "The Mahabharata." . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 4: "Speaking Parts." . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 7: "Thelonious Monk: Straight, No Chaser" (Charlotte Zwerin, United States). . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 9:30: "Mystery Train." . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 1:30: "The Documentator" (Istvan Darday and Gyorgyi Szalai, Hungary). . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 6: "Water and Power" (Pat O'Neill, United States), "Friendly Witness" (Warren Sonbert, United States), and "Mercy" (Abigail Child, United States). . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 9: "Looking for Langston" (Isaac Julien, Great Britain) and "Book of Days" (Meredith Monk, United States). . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 6:15: "The Documentator." . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 7:30: "Intolerance" (†). . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 6:15: "Life and Nothing But" (Bertrand Tavernier, France). . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 9:30: "Confession: A Chronicle of Alienation" (Georgi Gavrilov, U.S.S.R.). . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 6:15: "Yaaba" (Idrissa Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso). . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 9: "Life and Nothing But." (For tickets, call 362-1911.)

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," a chance to see the television dramas you may have missed in

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

the past thirty or so years. Sept. 26-30: Bret Harte's "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" (1958, NBC), with George C. Scott, Ruth White, Janet Ward, and Larry Hagman; and Gina Berriault's "The Stone Boy" (1960), with Arthur Hill and Luke Halpin. . . . From Oct. 3: F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" (1955, NBC), with Richard Franchot, George Macready, Signe Hasso, and Bill Daniels; and Sherwood Anderson's "I'm a Fool" (1954, CBS), with James Dean, Natalie Wood, and Eddie Albert. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 3. . . . ¶ Comedies seen on cable. Sept. 26-30: "Robin Williams—An Evening at the Met" (1987). Showings Tuesday at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesday through Saturday at 12:15. . . . ¶ Shows produced and directed by Gary Smith and Dwight Hemion. Sept. 26-30: "Linda in Wonderland" (1980, CBS), with Linda Lavin, Lynn Redgrave, Anthony Newley, and Ron Leibman; and "Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers" (1981, ABC), with Johnny Cash, Dottie West, and Roger Miller. Showings Tuesday through Saturday at 1. . . . ¶ "Twenty Years of Monty Python." From Oct. 3: "At Last the 1958 Show" (1967), with John Cleese, Graham Chapman, Marty Feldman, and Tim Brooke-Taylor; and "Do Not Adjust Your Set" (1968), with Terry Jones, Michael Palin, and Eric Idle. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15.

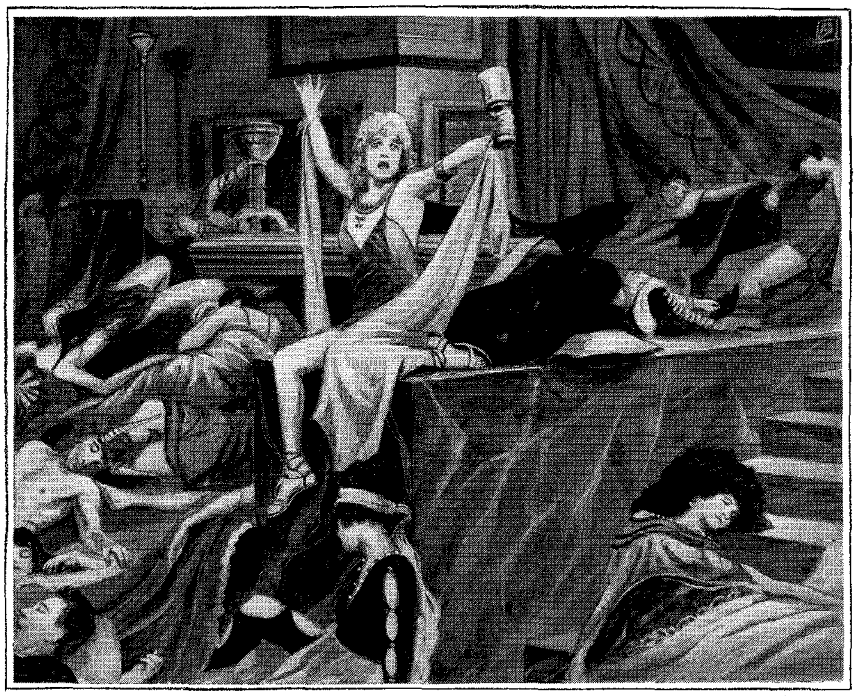
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—In the **RIKLIS THEATRE,** "A Hand-Made World: Sixty Years of Animated Features." Sept. 27 at 2:30: "Gulliver's Travels" (1939), from the Fleischer studios. . . . Sept. 28 at 2:30: "The Fabulous World of Jules Verne" (1956, Karel Zeman). . . . Sept. 29 at 2:30: "Tron" (1982, Steven Lisberger), with Jeff Bridges and Bruce Boxleitner. . . . Sept. 30 at 1: "The Point" (1971, Fred Wolff). . . . Sept. 30 at 3: "The Hobbit" (1977). . . . Sept. 30 at 5: "Lord of the Rings" (1978, Ralph Bakshi). . . . Oct. 1 at 1: "The Phantom Tollbooth" (1970). . . . Oct. 1 at 3: "Shinbone Alley" (1971). . . . Oct. 1 at 5: "Gay Purree" (1962, Abe Levitow). . . . Oct. 4 at 2:30: "Lord of the Rings." . . . ¶ In the **WARNER COMMUNICATIONS SCREENING ROOM,** "The Rise and Fall of the Television Western," a survey of this genre, 1943-73, shown in eleven three-hour thematic programs ("Minorities and the Western," "The Classic Adult Western," and "The Warner Bros. Western" are a few of the groupings). Showings Wednesdays through Fridays at 1:30 and Saturdays and Sundays at 11:30 and 2:35.

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—Films starring the late Indian actress Smita Patil. Sept. 29 at 3: "A Folk Tale" (1980, Ketan Mehta; in Gujarati). . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 7: "The Half-Truth" (1983, Govind Nihalani; in Hindi). . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at noon: "Chidambaram" (1985, G. Aravindan in Tamil and Malayalam). . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 4: "The Role" (1977, Shyam Benegal; in Hindi).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Films showing in either the Jonas Mekas Theatre or the Maya Deren Theatre. Sept. 27 at 8: Five short films by Jordan Belson, three short films by Bruce Baillie, and two short films by Douglass Crockwell. . . . ¶ Sept. 27 at 9:30: "Monte Carlo" (1930, Ernst Lubitsch), with Jeanette MacDonald, Jack Buchanan, ZaSu Pitts, and Claude Allistair. . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 8: "Quick Billy" (1970, Bruce Baillie). . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 9:30: "The Royal Family of Broadway" (1930, Ernst Lubitsch), with Fredric March, Ina Claire, and Mary Brian. . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 8: Six short films by Rudy Burckhardt. . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 9:30: Six short films by Stan Brakhage. . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 8: A second program of six short films by Burckhardt. . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 9:30: Seven short films by Robert Breer. . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 7: A second program of seven short films by Brakhage. . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 9: A third program of five short films by Burckhardt. . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 8: "In the Street" (1952, Helen Levitt, James Agee, and Janet Loeb) and "The Quiet One" (1948, Sidney Myers, Levitt, and Janice Loeb). . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 9:30: "The Big House" (1930, George Hill), with Robert Montgomery, Chester Morris, and Leila Hyams.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.



"Intolerance"

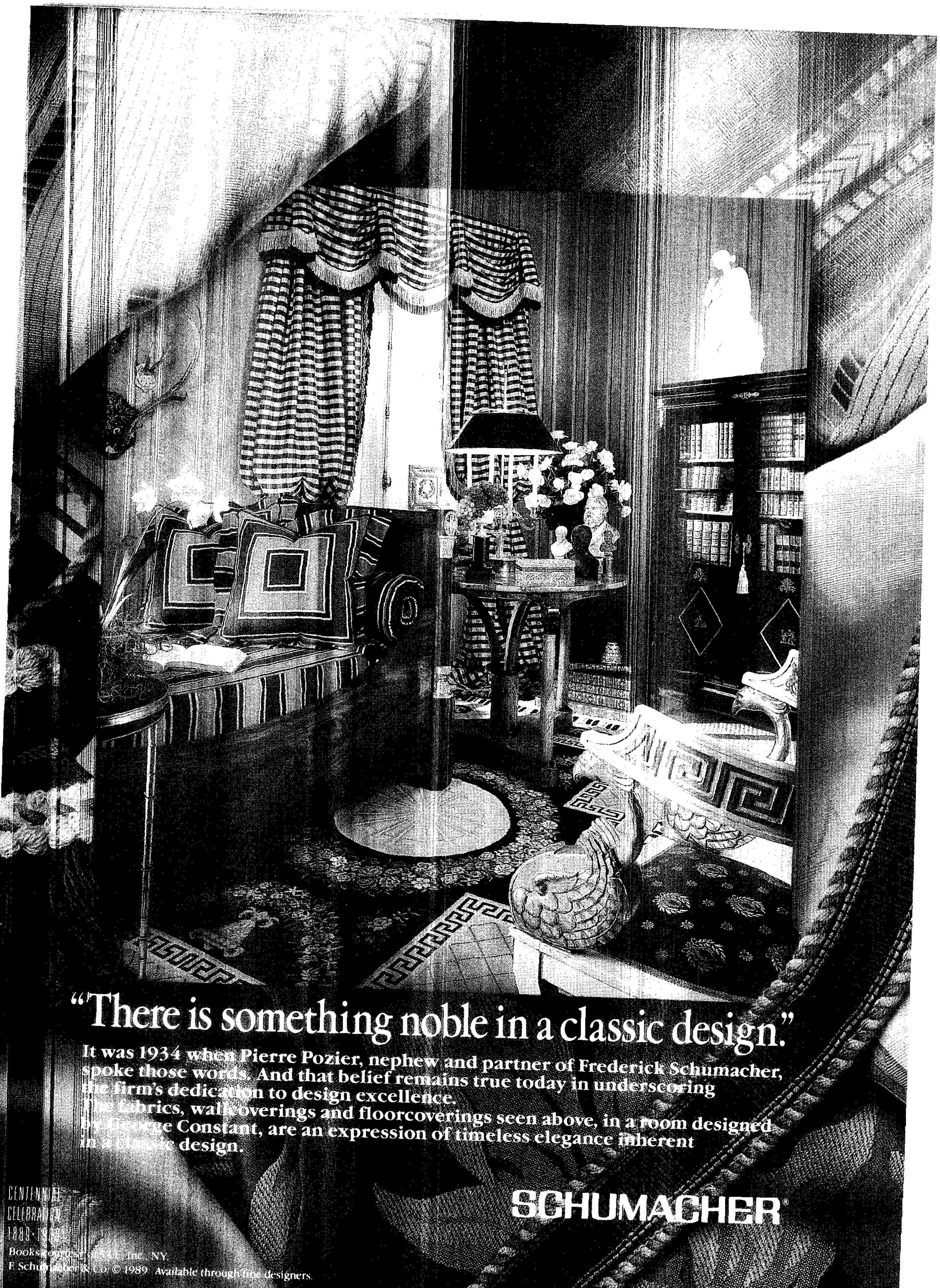
(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

THE ABYSS—This undersea epic is more complex technically than the previous films written and directed by James Cameron—"The Terminator" and "Aliens"—and, disastrously, it aims for emotional complexity as well. The main characters are an estranged married couple (Ed Harris and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio) who are forced to work together in an emergency salvage operation—searching the depths for a nuclear submarine that met with a mysterious accident. Cameron wants to turn this routine plot into a metaphor for the couple's attempt to salvage their relationship. Although that isn't a very subtle idea, he might have managed to put it over if he had concentrated on the action and let the meanings take care of themselves. But the action sequences are confusingly edited, the dialogue is painfully explicit, and the B-movie suspense devices he uses tend to violate the integrity of the metaphor. The big message is: You have to touch bottom—way, way down there—before you can see the light. Michael Biehn plays the villain.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/4/89.) (Gotham Cinema, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ 8th St. Playhouse, and Chelsea Cinemas; through Sept. 28.)

BATMAN—Tim Burton's powerfully glamorous comic-book epic, with sets angled and lighted like film noir, goes beyond pulp. It has a funky, nihilistic charge, and an eerie, poetic intensity. Michael Keaton is the fabulously wealthy Bruce Wayne, who patrols the sinister nighttime canyons of Gotham City in the guise of Batman, and Jack Nicholson is the sniggering mobster Jack Napier, who turns into the leering madman the Joker. The two are fighting for the soul of the city that spawned them. The movie is underwritten, but it has so many unpredictable spins that what's missing doesn't seem to matter much. It's mean and anarchic and blissful. Written by Sam Hamm, Warren Skaaren (and uncredited others), based on characters created by Bob Kane. With cinematography by Roger Pratt; design by Anton Furst.—P.K. (7/10/89) (Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex; through Sept. 28. . . . ¶ Columbia Cinema; starting Sept. 29, tentative.)

THE BIG PICTURE—The first feature directed by the actor Christopher Guest is a distressingly mild satire of Hollywood dealmaking in the eighties. Guest and his fellow-screenwriters, Michael Varhol and Michael McKean, frame their jokes about the stupidity of the movie industry with a dreary plot: Nick (Kevin Bacon) makes a student film that gets him a studio deal; he compromises and compromises in his desire for success, becomes an arrogant jerk who abuses his true-blue friends, loses his deal in a corporate reshuffle, learns to be a nice guy again, and finally gets to make his picture, his way. The only reason for seeing "The Big Picture" is Martin Short, who, in the tiny role (uncredited) of Nick's agent, provides ten minutes or so of wild, subversive inspiration. His scenes just explode: every time he's on the screen, you're on the floor. He's done up in a curly wig, his eyes slant upward at an alarming angle (he looks as if he'd had plastic surgery done by Doctor Caligari), and everything he says is nonsense, delivered with the slimy intimacy of show-biz patter. Short makes this fast-talking moron absolutely lovable. It's the best work he has done since the great days of SCTV. Among the other performers, Bacon, J. T. Walsh (as a studio executive), and Jennifer Jason Leigh (as a particularly flaky film student) all have their moments.—T.R. (9/18/89) (59th Street East Cinema.)

CASUALTIES OF WAR—A great, intense movie about war and rape, based on a Vietnam incident of 1966 that was reported in this magazine (October 18, 1969) by the late Daniel Lang. He gave an emotionally devastating account of the actions of a squad of five American soldiers who kidnapped a Vietnamese village girl, raped her, and then covered up their crime by killing her. One of the five men refused to take part in the rape, and, despite threats and attempts on his life, forced the Army to bring the other four to trial. He's the one who suffers from guilt: he can't forgive himself for his inability to save the girl's life. Directed by Brian De Palma, the movie has the purity of films such as "Grand Illusion" and "Shoeshine"; it's the culmination of his best work. Sean Penn gives a daring performance as the squad's twenty-year-old leader; Michael J. Fox is impressive as the soldier who can't keep quiet; Thuy Thu Le is the dazed, battered girl who haunts the movie long before she's dead. The adaptation



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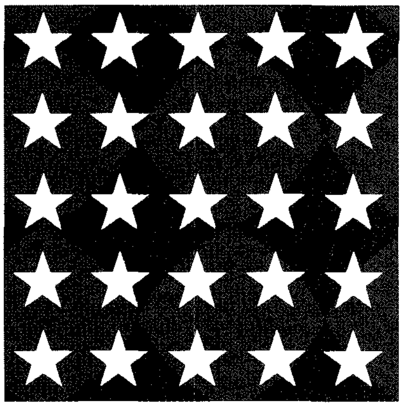

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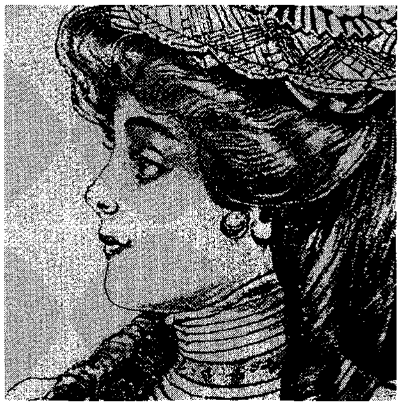

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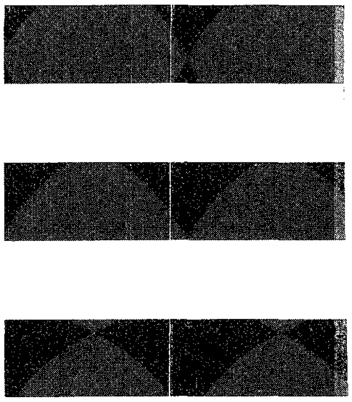

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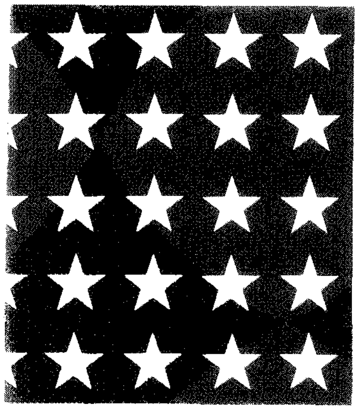

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Cognac, 40% Alc. Vol. ©W.A. Taylor & Co., Miami, FL 1989 (too explicit in a few places) is by David Rabe.—P.K. (8/21/89) (Manhattan Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Olympia, and National Twin; through Sept. 28.)

Chocolat—Whatever Claire Denis's first feature is supposed to be about, it proves, at least, that the English don't have a monopoly on swanky colonial torpor. The movie is constructed as an extended flashback: a young Frenchwoman (named France) travelling in Africa remembers her fifties girlhood in a remote outpost of Cameroon, where her father was a district officer. Most of this story consists of smoldering looks exchanged by the girl's beautiful mother (Giulia Boschi) and the family's handsome African "boy," Protée (Isaach de Bankolé). When Maman feels herself becoming too hot and bothered at the sight of the noble black man, she brusquely orders him to fetch something; Protée deals with his frustration by taking a lot of showers. Nothing actually happens. In denying him any kind of release for his pent-up desire, Denis encourages us to think she's making a political point. What she's really doing is dehumanizing him—treating him as a gleaming hunk whose anger and wounded reserve just make him more exotically alluring. "Chocolat" looks pretty good, but it's merde in a fancy wrapper. In French.—T.R. (Bleecker Street Cinema.)

Cookie—This gangster comedy, directed by Susan Seidelman, is about as disposable as a movie can be. The humor has no edge, despite the violent profession of most of the characters. Emily Lloyd, the British teen-ager who gave such a smashing performance in "Wish You Were Here," plays Cookie, the illegitimate daughter of a mobster (Peter Falk) about to be released from prison. Once he's out, they get to know each other, work together against his enemies, and so on. Lloyd, using a Brooklyn accent, is game and appealing but not very interesting here. Falk is more at home: he has effortless dignity and great timing. The most entertaining thing about this movie is listening to the supporting cast rasp away at their silly dialogue (by Alice Arlen and Nora Ephron). With Michael V. Gazzo, Brenda Vaccaro, and Lionel Stander around, this is the hoarsest cast in memory. Also featuring Dianne Wiest, Jerry Lewis, and Adrian Pasdar.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Eastside Cinema; through Sept. 28.)

Dead Poets Society—Robin Williams gives an astonishingly empathic performance as an eager, dedicated prep-school teacher in the late fifties. This teacher talks to his boys about the passions expressed in poetry and helps them release their creative impulses. But one of the boys, soaring on his new confidence, lacks the shrewdness and courage to deal with his rigid, uncomprehending father, and makes a disastrous choice. Directed by Peter Weir, from a script by Thomas Schulman, the picture draws out the obvious and turns itself into a classic. Weir, it appears, is more interested in the elegiac than in the dramatic. Like his "Gallipoli," this film has a gold ribbon attached to it. With Robert Sean Leonard, Ethan Hawke, Josh Charles, Gale Hansen, and Kurtwood Smith and Norman Lloyd.—P.K. (6/26/89) (Gramercy, and Guild. . . . ¶ Columbia Cinema; through Sept. 28.)

Distant Voices, Still Lives—Terence Davies' film, which has won awards at several international festivals, is airless, lugubrious, and overcomposed. It's an autobiographical movie, set in Liverpool in the forties and early fifties, and showing scenes from the life of a working-class family. In essence, it's kitchen-sink drama: Dad's a brute, Mom's a stoic sufferer, the kids rebel in pathetic, stunted ways—everybody's trapped, dead in the water. What's original—and creepy—about Davies' treatment of this familiar material is his relentless aestheticizing of it. He jumbles the chronology, uses a ton of old popular songs (à la Dennis Potter), and even messes with the color process. Davies uses all the art-film techniques at his command to kill his family, embalm them, and rearrange their bodies in a series of lifeless, pristine tableaux. With Freda Dowie, Pete Postlethwaite, Angela Walsh, Lorraine Ashbourne, and Dean Williams.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Quad Cinema.)

Do the Right Thing—The third feature by Spike Lee takes place in the black neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, on a punishingly hot day; the focus of the action is a pizzeria, Sal's Famous, which is apparently the last white-owned business on the block; and the climax is a riot sparked by a monstrous act of police brutality. At its most basic, Lee's intention is to demonstrate how in a racially polarized society the slow accumulation of small irritations can swell to something huge and ugly and lethal. It's a solid idea for a movie, and initially the picture provides its share of incidental pleasures. And, although most of the many characters Lee shows us are types, at least there are a lot of different ones, and their encounters are often funny. But Lee goes wrong by pushing his material to a "powerful" climax, a Scorsese-like explosion of violence: he sacrifices political clarity for the sake of the big statement. He's nimble-witted and passionate, but his movie seems to shout at us rather than speak to us. In addition to writing, producing, and directing, Lee plays the pivotal role of Mookie, the pizza deliveryman. Others in the cast are Danny Aiello (as Sal), Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Giancarlo Esposito, Bill Nunn, Rosie Perez, Joie Lee, John Turturro, and Richard Edson; as a trio of middle-aged street-corner philosophers, Paul Benjamin, Frankie Faison, and Robin Harris are responsible for the movie's best, loosest scenes.—T.R. (7/24/89) (23rd St. West Triplex, and Worldwide Cinemas; through Sept. 28. . . . ¶ Cinema 3. Evenings only.)

An imposing, inscrutable Roman aristocrat emerges from his bath and seductively, threateningly tells his pretty male bath servant, "No man can withstand Rome. No nation. How much less . . . a boy?"

An elegant gentleman with haunted eyes teeters on a cliff edge, and snipes at the frightened girl who stumbles upon him, "Who are you? What are you staring at?"

A fifteenth-century British monarch, cloaked in yeoman's garb, scolds the lords who think they need more troops to conquer the French at Agincourt. Raising his arms like lances, the king declares in a swelling voice, "Gentlemen in England, now abed, shall think themselves accursed they were not here."

Laurence Olivier's acting imbues these scenes—from, respectively, Stanley Kubrick's "Spartacus" (1960), Alfred Hitchcock's "Rebecca" (1940), and his own "Henry V" (1944)—with a tingling immortality. The Museum of Modern Art is screening these films this week, in tribute to Olivier. As Maxim de Winter in "Rebecca" (September 28 and 30), he's mostly just a sensual enigma. But Crassus in "Spartacus" (September 28-29) and Henry V (September 29-30) show off his versatility and power. His aspirate, devil-eyed dictator Crassus holds himself above "the mob" and says, "Rome is an eternal thought in the mind of God"; his full-throated, straight-arrow Henry V is a brother as well as a father to all Englishmen. It is revelatory to see the opposite roles back to back: they present twin peaks of Olivier's Olympian heights.

A Dry White Season—With Donald Sutherland and Marlon Brando, directed by Euzhan Palcy. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Loews New York Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Honey, I Shrunk the Kids—A contraption invented by a suburban nerd scientist (Rick Moranis) cuts both his kids and the neighbors' down to size: a quarter of an inch. Unaware of what has happened, and unable to hear their pipsqueak cries, Dad sweeps them into a dustpan, dumps them in a garbage bag, and hauls the bag out to the curb. The kids have to make their way back to the house across the (not very recently mowed) lawn—a long trek for tiny, tiny legs. There are adventures, of course, engineered by the sort of special-effects "magic" that probably even the youngest audiences have learned by now to dread. The real surprise of this movie—which was directed by Joe Johnston, an effects specialist from Industrial Light & Magic, and which carries an immense list of technical credits (including a "Scorpion Crew," a "Bee Sequence Crew," and a "Stop Motion Ant Crew")—is that it's friendly, good-humored, and unpretentious. Johnston manages to scale down not only the kids but also the movie's sense of its own importance. Also with Matt Frewer, Marcia Strassman, and Kristine Sutherland; Jared Rushton, Amy O'Neill, Thomas Brown, and Robert Oliveri are the kids. The imaginative cinematography is by Hiro Narita.—T.R. (Embassy.)

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade—This mediocre third film in the Indiana Jones trilogy—a reprise of the first, "Raiders of the Lost Ark"—is a mixture of cliffhanger and anti-Nazi thriller and religious spectacle. It's enjoyable, but familiar, and the action lacks the exhilarating, leaping precision that the director, Steven Spielberg, is famous for. The only real spin is in the slapstick teamwork of Harrison Ford, as the archeologist-adventurer Indy, and Sean Connery, as Indy's father, a medievalist who's too engrossed in his studies to pay much attention to his daredevil son's triumphs. With River Phoenix playing Indy as a boy, Alison Doody, Denholm Elliott, John Rhys-Davies, and Julian Glover. The screenplay, by Jeffrey Boam, is based on a story devised by the producer George Lucas and Menno Meyjes.—P.K. (6/12/89) (Embassy.)

Intolerance (1916)—D. W. Griffith's epic celebration of the potentialities of the film medium—perhaps the greatest movie ever made and the greatest folly in movie history. It is charged with visionary excitement about the power of movies to combine music, dance, narrative, drama, painting, and photography—to do alone what all the other arts together had done. In this extravaganza one can see the source of most of the major traditions of the screen—the methods of Eisenstein and von Stroheim, the Germans and the Scandinavians, and, when it's bad, De Mille. It combines extraordinary lyric passages, realism, and psychological details with nonsense, vulgarity, and painful sentimentality. Four stories set in different historical periods are told by crosscutting, and they reach simultaneous climaxes. The cast includes Lillian Gish in the linking device; Mae Marsh and Robert Harron in the modern story, "The Mother and the Law"; Bessie Love in the Biblical story, "The Nazarene"; Margery Wilson and Eugene Pallette in "The Medieval Story," which includes the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of the Huguenots in 1572; Constance Talmadge, Elmo Lincoln, Seena Owen, Alfred Paget, and Tully Marshall in "The Fall of Babylon." Cinematography by G. W. Bitzer and Karl Brown; Griffith's assistants included W. S. Van Dyke, Tod Browning, and von Stroheim. Silent. The prints were originally dyed in several hues, and crews of girls added extra color frame by frame; the projectionists were also instructed to throw beams of red and blue light to intensify the effects.—P.K. (New York Film Festival, Alice Tully Hall; Oct. 2, at 7:30.)

Lethal Weapon 2—Chases, explosions, fights, barrages of insults, the odd moment of manly sentimentality—these are the standard elements of American action movies in the eighties, and the "Lethal Weapon" movies use them with an amazing lack of shame. There's lots of comedy, but no real relief: the punch lines slam into our brains like cars into plate-glass windows. The only thing that makes this movie at all distinctive is its hero, a reckless L.A. cop named Riggs, a role that allows Mel Gibson to zip through the picture like a free electron. Riggs isn't actually trying to kill himself this time (as he was in the first movie), but he's still a wild man and Gibson is still having a great time playing him. It's a mischievous, sprightly performance: he treats the action sequences as if they were slapstick routines. (Unfortunately, the director, Richard Donner, doesn't have as

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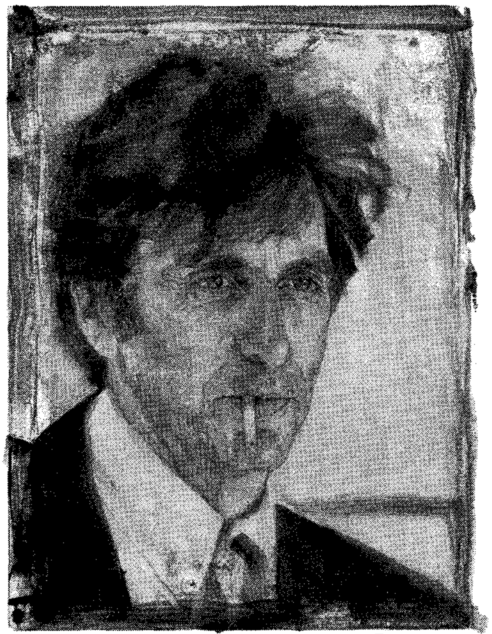
light a touch.) Danny Glover plays his partner, Murtaugh, an easygoing, conservative black family man; he's mostly called upon to react with horror to Riggs' dangerous antics, and the joke of their relationship gets a little tiresome. (The effect, sometimes, is of a white guy doing heroic stuff while his black pal shuffles along beside him. Glover, a good actor, deserves better.) Joe Pesci does small wonders with his supporting role as a ferrety, motor-mouthed money launderer, and Joss Ackland glowers like Alastair Sim as the head villain, a South African diplomat who smuggles drugs. Also with Patsy Kensit. Jeffrey Boam wrote the screenplay. The score is by Michael Kamen, Eric Clapton, and David Sanborn.—T.R. (Murray Hill, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and West Side Cinema. . . . ¶ Gemini, and Chelsea Cinemas; through Sept. 28.)



Al Pacino in "Sea of Love"

The Little Thief—Claude Miller's movie, set in the early fifties, is about a rebellious provincial teenager named Janine (Charlotte Gainsbourg). The screenplay (by Miller, his wife, Annie, and Luc Béraud) is based on an original story by François Truffaut and Claude de Givray; Truffaut himself reportedly planned to direct a film of the story. This movie bears recognizable traces of the late New Wave director: it's gentle-natured and sympathetic to the young, and its structure is casual and anecdotal, like the Doinel movies. What it lacks is Truffaut's energy. Miller is a perfectly decent craftsman, and the movie is never unwatchable, but nothing drives it forward from one scene to the next, and Janine's lucklessness and her tough-kid spirit don't resonate as Antoine's do. For Truffaut, the story wasn't the most important thing; it's all that's left of him in "The Little Thief." Also with Didier Bezace, Simon de la Brosse, and Nathalie Cardone. In French.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Parenthood—The script, by Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, is ambitiously constructed, tracing the relationships of several boomer-age parents with their kids, their siblings, and their own parents. The advantage of this arrangement is that none of the characters are onscreen very long: we have time to get sick of only about half of them, and some—especially the nervous, eager dad played by Steve Martin—are fun to watch. The drawback is that the movie has no drive. The dull title captures the tone precisely: the whole thing has been conceived generically, abstractly, and by the end the director, Ron Howard, is rushing from scene to scene tidying up loose ends, to make sure that each little individual drama gets its point across and that they all add up to a correct answer to the essay question "What is parenthood?" The movie tries very hard, but its wisdom is on the forlorn side. Also with Mary Steenburgen, Rick Moranis, Dianne Wiest, Jason Robards, Harley Kozak, Martha Plimpton, Keanu Reeves, and Tom Hulce.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Baronet, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin. . . . ¶ 34th St. East, and Art Greenwich Twin; through Sept. 28.)

Penn & Teller Get Killed—With Penn and Teller, directed by Arthur Penn. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Sutton, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Sea of Love—This romantic thriller, written by Richard Price and directed by Harold Becker, has a simple and rather familiar story: a cop (Al Pacino) investigating a series of murders falls in love with one of the suspects. But the movie isn't entirely predictable; it provides plenty of surprises, odd little riffs that keep us alert. And Pacino i amazing. He's playing a middle-aged, divorced, depressed, semi-alcoholic man who exposes himself to great peril by conducting an affair with a young woman who might be a killer. The actor's face has a saggy, disappointed look now, but there's something hopeful, a wary avidity, in his eyes. In this role, he seems to be startling himself with his own vitality. His abandon precisely matches the character's; it's scary and exciting Barkin is perfectly cast as an ambiguous object of desire; she can look very soft or very, very hard and the camera doesn't know quite what to make of her. It's a consistently entertaining movie, although Becker's direction has a tendency to flatten the highs in the material. (And Price's script, full of sharp dialogue and smart ideas, nevertheless has a few characteristic lapses—most damagingly, a slackening of inspiration toward the end.) The picture never does resolve the tension between its safe, formulaic elements and its more original ones. It likes the idea of romantic recklessness, but it won't give up its professionalism, its habits of respectability. Also with John Goodman (in good form, as the hero's partner), William Hickey, Richard Jenkins, Christine Estabrook, and Michael Rooker. (The title song, a pop ballad first recorded by Phil Phillips in 1959, is played throughout the movie, and it works beautifully.)—T.R. (9/18/89) (Bijou Cinema, Bay Cinema, Coronet, Loews Orpheum, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Metro Cinema.)

sex, lies, and videotape—Steven Soderbergh's smooth, handsome first feature generates a fair degree of psychological tension out of next to nothing. It's a triangle drama with a cunning little kink in it. The triangle consists of Ann (Andie MacDowell), a beautiful young Southern woman who has "never really been that much into sex"; her husband, John (Peter Gallagher), a sleazy yuppie lawyer; and her younger sister, Cynthia (Laura San Giacomo), who's sleeping with John. The kink is an old college pal of John's, named Graham (James Spader), a soft-spoken drifter who comes to town and changes everybody's life. Graham has sworn off sex, because, he says, it's the only way for him to stay honest; he's impotent, except when he's watching one of his dozens of home videos—all of them interviews he has conducted with women about sex. He's like a retired gunslinger, a laconic hombre who won't pull his artillery out of its holster because he's seen too much killin' already. This is "Shane" remade as a Southern psychodrama. But there's some real conviction in it—a mixed-up fervor that keeps us watching.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Plaza, Waverly, and Cinema Studio.)

Shirley Valentine—Willy Russell, who wrote the play (and the movie) "Educating Rita," gives us another Englishwoman learning a thing or two about life. This time, it's a housewife in her forties whose kids are grown and gone and whose husband is so unresponsive that she spends a lot of time talking to the kitchen wall. A friend persuades her to come along on a two-week holiday in Greece, and Shirley, away from her dull husband and her constricted life, starts to enjoy herself for the first time since her adolescence. But she's not just having a fling or reliving her giddy youth—the writer wants us to understand that she's experiencing deeper, maturer pleasures. Russell's script is an adaptation of his play, which was a monologue. Though this isn't a one-woman show anymore, it's still a showcase for perky, round-faced Pauline Collins. She's very likable, and her performance is mercifully restrained. Lewis Gilbert's direction is long on maturity and short on pleasure: the picture moves at a careful, measured, guided-tour pace. By the end, poor Shirley seems more than ever like a lost soul: an Edna O'Brien character who woke up and found herself on "The Love Boat." Also with Tom Conti.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, and Loews Paramount.)

IMON OF THE DESERT (1965)—Luis Buñuel made this short satirical feature (forty-five minutes) in Mexico, just before he did "Belle de Jour." It's a jovial comedy about the temptations of St. Simeon Stylites, the fifth-century desert anchorite who spent thirty-seven years preaching to pilgrims from his perch on top of a column; in both a literal and figurative sense, it's a shaggy-saint story. Simon (Claudio Brook) performs his miracles, and the crowds evaluate them like a bunch of New York cabdrivers discussing a parade: whatever it was, it wasn't much. The Devil, in the female form of Silvia Pinal (much more amusing as the Devil than she was in her guises in other Buñuel films), tempts Simon, and at one point frames him in front of the local priests, who are more than willing to believe the worst of him. He falls, of course, because of the animal instincts he has tried to deny. Buñuel couldn't raise the money to finish the film, and he resorted to a bummer of a jokey ending, in which the foolish saint is transported to the modern world and left, a lost soul, in a Greenwich Village discothèque full of dancing teen-agers. Up to then, this little film ranks with Buñuel's finest; his technique here is so simple and direct that the movie is an aesthetic assault on bourgeois taste. In Spanish.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; starting Oct. 4.)

SOME LIKE IT HOT (1959)—A comedy set in the Prohibition era, with transvestism, impotence, role confusion, and borderline inversion—and all hilariously innocent, though always on the brink of really disastrous double-entendre. Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon are the musicians who witness the St. Valentine's Day Massacre and then hide out from the mobsters by disguising themselves as women and joining an all-girl band. Marilyn Monroe and Joe E. Brown are their somewhat confused love partners. Curtis demonstrates a parodistic gift with an imitation of Cary Grant (which he went on doing for years afterward), and Lemmon is demoniacally funny—he really gives in to women's clothes, and begins to think of himself as a sexy girl. Monroe gives perhaps her most characteristic performance, which means that she's both charming and embarrassing; Brown is inspired, the way he was years before in Max Reinhardt's movie of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," when he made some of us weep from laughter. With George Raft, Pat O'Brien, Nehemiah Persoff, Mike Mazurki, Tom Kennedy, and, on the soundtrack, Matty Malneck's orchestra. Directed (unevenly) by Billy Wilder, who also collaborated on the screenplay with I. A. L. Diamond.—P.K. (Cinema Village; starting Oct. 4.)

TOM JONES (1963)—Tony Richardson whizzes through the Fielding novel, pausing for a marvellous, lewd eating scene. With Albert Finney, Hugh Griffith, Edith Evans, George Devine, Joan Greenwood, Diane Cilento, Joyce Redman, and many others. The script is by John Osborne.—P.K. (Paris.)

WHEN HARRY MET SALLY . . . —Rob Reiner's movie, from a script by Nora Ephron, takes a screwball-comedy idea and inflates it like a rubber raft. Harry (Billy Crystal) and Sally (Meg Ryan) meet in the late seventies, rub each other the wrong way, and then, after breaking up with their partners, become close friends; all the while, they're conducting a running debate on the question "Can a man and a woman ever be just friends, without sex getting in the way?" It's a Rohmer movie played as a sitcom. Crystal muddles through amiably, but Ryan flounders: the filmmakers give her impossible, unplayable scenes, and all she can do is be adorable. The movie keeps telling us that it's real and truthful and universal. Everything in it seems false. Also with Carrie Fisher and Bruno Kirby.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Beekman, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas; through Sept. 28.)

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Helen Fusscas is probably the only art dealer in America who insists on making her own wild flower arrangements for every opening. Talking with Helen about Connecticut Impressionism is much the same as discussing the phonograph with Thomas Edison. Hers was the first Connecticut gallery to specialize in Connecticut Impressionist art . . .

Much to Jeffrey Cooley's delight his gallery has doubled in size since moving to Old Lyme in 1987. Consequently, "Wild Azaleas" by Henry G. Thomson is afforded the same visibility as Jasper F. Cropsey's masterpiece of "Lake Wa-Wa-Yanda." Only moments from the Florence Griswold Museum, the gallery maintains a particular interest in works by Old Lyme Impressionists . . .

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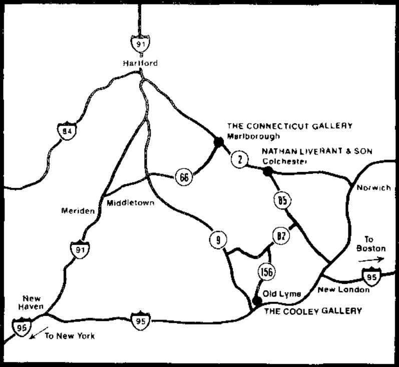

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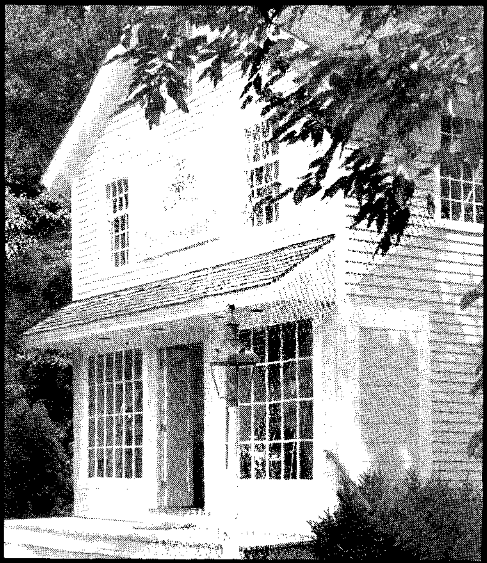

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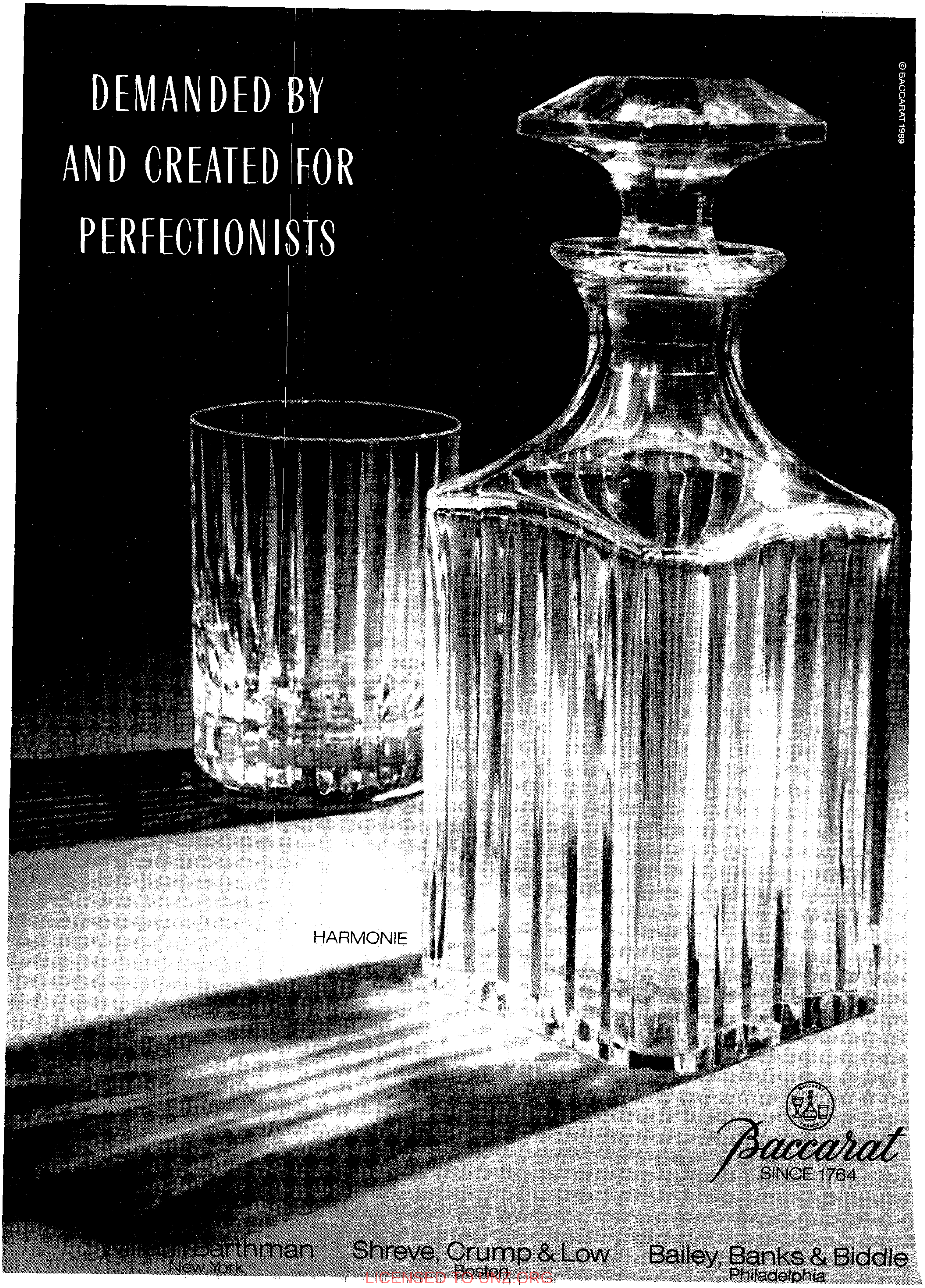
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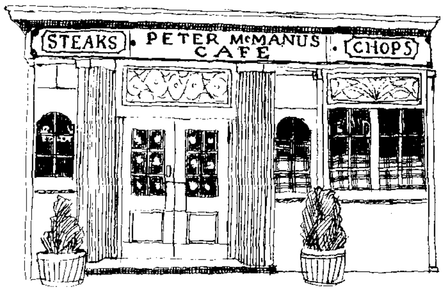
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

A COUPLE of weeks ago, a debate between liberals and conservatives, entitled "Resolved: Free Market Competitiveness Is Best for America," was broadcast on Channel 13. Everything about the evening suggested an adversarial encounter. The debaters—George McGovern, Gary Hart, John Kenneth Galbraith, and Pat Schroeder on the liberal team, and William Buckley, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Jack Kemp, and Newt Gingrich for the conservatives—sat at tables opposite each other, and, perhaps to whet the blood-lust of the participants, the moderator, Michael Kinsley, introduced them by inflicting metaphorical flesh wounds on both sides. The actual contest took the form of aggressive declarations that there was no debate. The conservatives said that there was no debate because Communist economies were self-acknowledged failures. The liberals said that there was no debate because everyone knew that the market could not take care of all society's needs. And in fact there really *was* no debate. Who could believe in either a perfectly free market or an absolutely planned one? Toward the middle of the evening, Pat Schroeder pointed this out, and said that the real question was what ratio of planned market and free market would produce the most competitive mixed economy. The patent truth of this statement had a bizarre effect on the atmosphere, especially after Jeane Kirkpatrick, who was occupying the opposite rostrum, said that she agreed. Directionlessness set in. Kirkpatrick finally saved the day by saying that Schroeder thought that a mixed economy was desirable, whereas she, Kirkpatrick, believed that it was undesirable but necessary, whereupon, mercifully, their time was up.

Agreement can be confusing. Antagonism, on the other hand, often creates structure. It can provide the antagonists with an identity, a role, a sense of purpose, a place in the scheme of things, and a motivating belief in their own rightness. In a way, it aids communication, by sharply defining the terms of debate. This is how the structure of antagonism worked during the Cold War. But the old struggles are now evaporating and, with them, the viability of the structures that grew around them. If the nuclear arsenals of the Soviet Union and the United States are not aimed at each other, then at whom *are* they aimed? There is a kind of security in old struggles, even ones that were once dire threats to security.

In the old structure, the United States occupied a supreme, world-dominating position, and it's not likely to enjoy an equal eminence in whatever new structure emerges. This alone may explain the Bush Administration's attempts to keep the old structure alive. Last spring, long past the time when Gorbachev's sincerity could be reasonably doubted, and as he continued to make spectacular headlines that in one way or another announced that the period of antagonism between East and West was over, the Administration clung to its plan to deploy a successor to the Lance missile, insisting that if we didn't modernize the Lance, NATO would disintegrate. (In fact, NATO was in danger of disintegration *because* of our insistence on modernization.) Then, to almost everyone's relief, President Bush abruptly abandoned the struggle. He acknowledged the transformations that were taking place, pronounced them good, and proposed some of his own. So what had the business of the Lance been about? Presumably, the Administration's energy in defending it came from a reluctance to abandon the structure of antagonism in which symbols like the Lance are important.



STUART LEEDS

Now it appears that the Administration is slipping back into this mind-set, though with a twist. Officials admit that Gorbachev's changes are authentic, but they are saying that in this very authenticity is a danger, for these changes, too, could weaken NATO, by encouraging its members to develop individual relationships with Eastern-bloc nations. This position seems to assume that unfriendly relations with the Soviet Union are beneficial whether or not there is a reason for them. As Majority Leader George Mitchell said on the floor of the Senate recently, "the Bush Administration seems almost nostalgic about the cold war and the rigid superpower relationship that divided the world into two hostile and isolated camps." And even if the Cold War were something to be nostalgic about, can a structure of antagonism function if there is no longer a real struggle?

Meanwhile, evidence pours in daily that the old structure of the world is dissolving. The most recent example is that of Hungary, which, acting not as a member of the Warsaw Pact, set against the West, but, instead, as a "bridge" (as a Hungarian official termed it), allowed thousands of refugees from East Germany, its erstwhile ally, to flee to West Germany, its erstwhile enemy. A Hungarian official quoted in the *Times* said that in Hungary neutrality is "generally accepted as the ultimate goal," and added, "We want to open up and diversify relations with Western Europe. . . . We are fully aware that in some cases the conditions are not yet ripe for us to be a full-fledged member of that community. Our economy is not yet at that level. But in humanitarian concerns we are closer to the West." Gorbachev supported Hungary. East Germany, meanwhile—perhaps aware that without an ideological struggle it didn't have much reason to exist—dug itself more deeply into a rigidly Communist position. In a way, it was becoming an antagonist without an adversary—something that could happen to the United States, too.

The Hungarian developments reminded us of a conversation that we had with a young Hungarian last spring. He was a sociologist, and had come here to study. He said that he found America far more Communistic than Hungary, because in restaurants you had ketchup, sugar, cream, pickles, salt, and pepper for the taking, and people took only what they needed. In Hungary it would all be stolen, he said. What's more, he and his friends had longed to try communal living but had been unable to, because in Hungary a lease cannot be held by more than one individual. The question of democracy did not really interest him. He assumed that democracy would come, and he took it for granted that our democracy was not perfect. He was far more concerned about pollution. And he was sure that the social sciences could be perfected to the point where political change could be predicted exactly. Aha! we thought. There is a difference between us after all.

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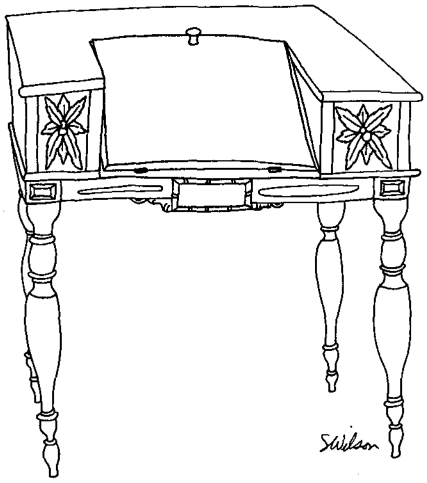
Dividends

"IT is rare for any friction to develop around a piano-bar." That's Kathy Brown. So is "People go where the good piano-bars are." So is "There are endless ways to associate people with songs. For instance, the way they look, move, what they say, or what they do for a living. Some people look like prominent people or resemble animals. Use Association!!" Ms. Brown is the author of the privately published "How to Work a Piano-Bar Successfully," a copy of which is in our possession. Some of the chapters are titled "How to Build a Following," "Personality," "Carry the Ball," "Guest Performers," "Last Call," and "Make the Cash Register Sing."

Ms. Brown, who is from Jacksonville, Florida, defines a piano bar as a place with a piano and "at least twelve bar stools surrounding it." When we think of a piano bar, we think of the piano player Dorothy Scardino, whose nineteen years working the same room makes her cabaret act among the longer-running ones in Manhattan—perhaps the longest-running act that takes place exclusively during the afternoon. The room that Mrs. Scardino works is big, with columns, a tall ceiling, and Las Vegas-style lights. Her employers serve no liquor, but personify the best kind of piano-bar owners, in that they extend credit, cash checks, and lend money. Not to everyone but to a select clientele who have filled out forms and stood in line and submitted to rigorous interviews involving frank discussions about their incomes and debts and history of credit. That her employers serve no liquor is probably a good thing, since Mrs. Scardino works for the officers of the Manhattan Savings Bank at Eighty-sixth Street and Third Avenue, and only the most reckless kind of fool would mix banking and liquor.

The area of the bank where Mrs. Scardino performs has a crescent of chairs upholstered with a fabric that did not exist before the Industria Revolution, and there is a small circle of blue-and-purple carpet, on which Mrs. Scardino sits (under the Las Vegas-style lights). Beneath the piano and the bench, on which Mrs. Scardino places a blue corduroy cushion, is a circle of plastic. Occasionally, Mrs. Scardino taps discreetly with her foot on the plastic. The sound she makes is in time with the music, unlike the tapping that comes from the keys of the typewriters over in the loans-and-finance section, which is syncopated and sounds like tap dancing. Ms. Brown emphasizes that a common activity in a piano bar is singing, possibly on the part of the piano player but definitely on the part of the patrons. There is absolutely no singing at Mrs. Scardino's place of business. Anyone who tried to sing would be discouraged politely by one of the security guards. Another way to meet one of the security guards is to lean on Mrs. Scardino's piano for longer than the amount of time required to exchange the briefest pleasantries. On top of the piano is a sign that says "NO SMOKING," and sometimes there is a small vase of silk flowers.



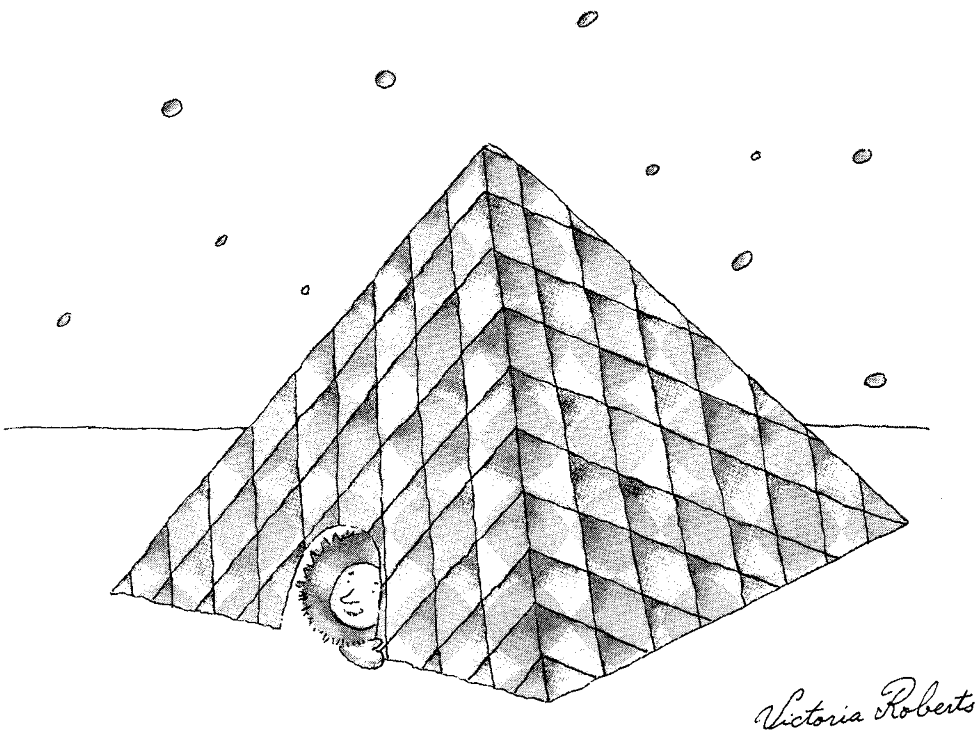
Mrs. Scardino has blond hair, and is tall and thin and has a terrific smile. She is married to Charlie Scardino, who owns the Leo Dryer Office, a music agency that can supply from one to fifty musicians, depending on the size of the room. Charlie Scardino is also a musician; he plays bass. Mrs. Scardino says that she could not be married to another piano player, because either he would be better than she was, and then she would be jealous, or he would not be as good, in which case she would feel scornful, and you just can't hide that kind of thing for long. Onstage, Mrs. Scardino prefers to be known by her maiden name, Dorothy Denny, because she believes that her talent came to her from her father and using his name is a way to give him credit.

Mrs. Scardino works forty-seven or forty-eight weeks a year at the bank. When she has time off, she occasionally works a cruise with her husband. She had difficulty, at first, accommodating herself to the idea of playing in a bank; she felt that it was like whistling in church. Now she believes that playing in a bank provides her with more freedom than she would have if she were performing in a lounge: she doesn't have to stick strictly to the beat, because no one's dancing.

When Mrs. Scardino stops playing, around three, the piano bar turns into a bank again, with the tellers' machines making that ratchety sound as they record deposits and withdrawals in passbooks, and babies in strollers making noise, and the whirring of the upright fans. Before she leaves, Mrs. Scardino sits at an empty desk to change into her flats for the walk to the subway, then says goodbye to everyone.

A passage now from the chapter on personality in Ms. Brown's book: "It is not a good idea to become overly personal with patrons, and allow them to unload their problems on you. For this reason, never give out your telephone number or address to everyone that asks for it. The majority of your well meaning 'fans' will call you when you are working with your material, or getting much needed rest. Some people will even have the nerve to drop by your home unexpectedly to practice with you, so that they will sound good when singing at the piano-bar. If this occurs, simply explain that you are paid $ per hour for this service, and that is how you earn your living. If you are firm, people will respect you."

If you think about this for a while, you'll realize that it is extremely useful advice and applies to more than just a piano bar.



ESKIMO PEI

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Balloonist

IF Phileas Fogg were alive today, he might resemble Julian Nott, Britain's foremost hot-air balloonist and a throwback to the old school of gentlemen adventurers. His airborne escapades include the first float across the Sahara Desert, a passage over the English Channel in a solar-heated balloon of his own design, and three hot-air-balloon altitude records—the last of which survived for seven years. Now he is poised to invade the record books once more, with the first non-stop balloon voyage around the world. When we learned that he was in New York, we went to wish him bon voyage.

We found Mr. Nott, a lanky, forty-five-year-old Oxford-trained engineer, seated behind a semicircular desk in a windowless office provided by Rolex Watch U.S.A., one of fifty firms that are lending him their services. Behind him hung a blue-white-and-red Explorers Club flag—the same weathered banner, No. 136, that accompanied Thor Heyerdahl on the Kon Tiki. The flag will go aboard, Mr. Nott explained, in a crisp accent that reminded us of Sebastian, in "Brideshead Revisited," when his hundred-and-forty-five-foot balloon Explorer lifts off from California, sometime between November and April. If all goes well, he and his crewman, Buddy Squires, will ride the jet stream for a fortnight or more over the southern United States, the Atlantic Ocean, North Africa, India, Indo-China, Japan, and Hawaii before returning to terra firma. As with most balloon excursions, the landing will be left to improvisation. "Frankly, we'd be happy to land anywhere in North America," Mr. Nott said.

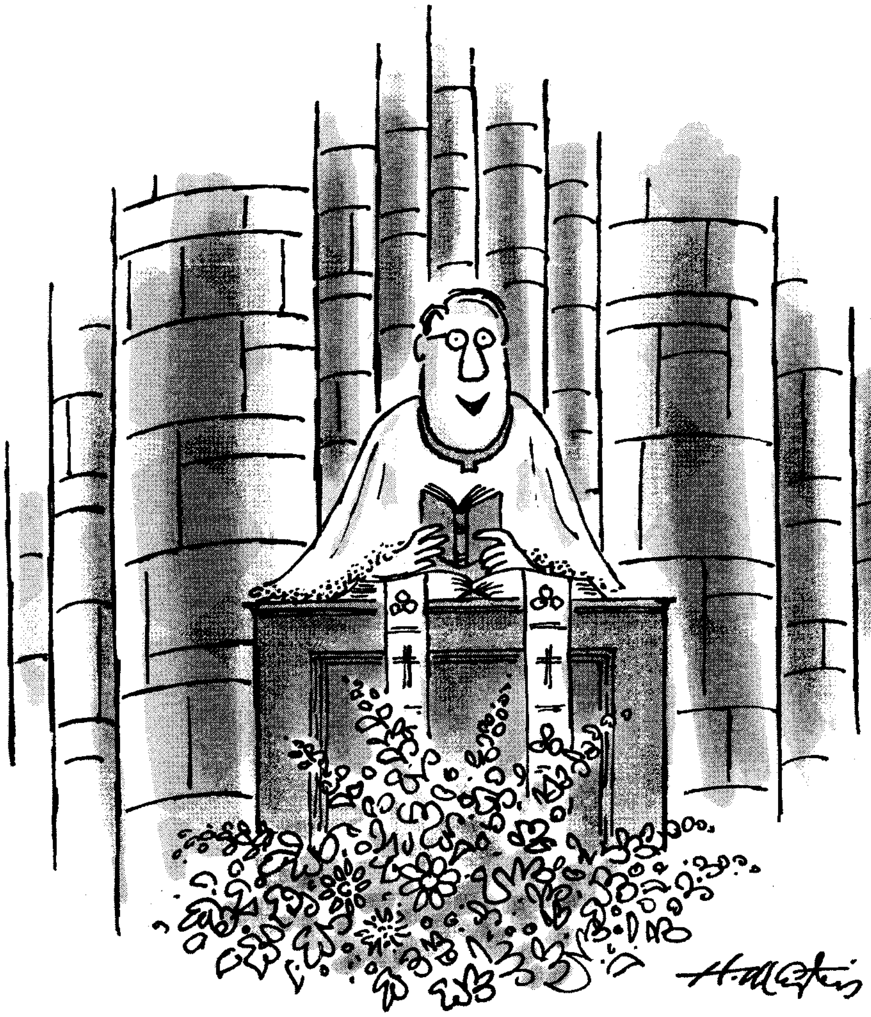
We asked him how he got started in ballooning.

"I was in a London discothèque in 1969 with a girl who was celebrating her twenty-first birthday," he said, smiling. "I was keen to impress her, and while we were dancing to the song 'Up, Up and Away' I promised her a balloon trip. We went for that ride, and I was bowled over. She wasn't impressed, but it changed my life." Later that year, Mr. Nott and five friends bought a balloon of their own and barnstormed across Britain, offering joyrides at county fairs and other functions. "I never looked back," he told us. "After twenty years, I still get the most intense, simple pleasure from floating over the countryside. You feel as if the earth were gliding past you. This is the same thing, only longer."

Balloonists have known that circumnavigation of the globe was feasible since 1966, when an unmanned weather balloon circled the earth. "Intellectually, it was obvious that someone could do it," Mr. Nott said, tracing the balloon's wobbly path on a map. "Emotionally, it was not so clear." Meanwhile, in 1978, three American pilots crossed the Atlantic in a balloon, a feat that Mr. Nott coveted. "I was really angry with myself," he recalled. "I felt that I could have done it, but I hadn't the courage to go out and raise the money." The frustration spurred him to consider the more audacious global flight. Three years later, he retreated to an Oxfordshire pub, where he spent most of a February weekend hunched over a calculator, a pad, and a lineup of sturdy lagers. He resolved to make the big trip. "It was one of those moments when you say, 'What am I going to do with my life?' " he told us. "The hard part is the emotional choice. Once you've made up your mind, the rest follows logically."

Mr. Nott has planned his voyage as a careful, scientific pursuit. "I've got too much imagination to set off on a wing and a prayer," he said. "One-third of the effort goes into the project. The other two-thirds go into making it safe." Instead of using the old, haphazard method of unwrapping a crumpled balloon across a field and ascending with the first zephyr, Mr. Nott has arranged to inflate his balloon inside a Second World War blimp hangar near Los Angeles, and he may spend days, even a week, inspecting it for leaks. He replaced the familiar wicker basket with a heated and pressurized Kevlar gondola—a kind of miniature space capsule—but after uncovering some bugs he scrapped the gondola and rebuilt it. Mr. Nott has even researched the emotional strain of life inside a six-by-seven-foot cabin, and, on the advice of NASA psychologists and the Apollo 12 astronaut Alan Bean, he and Mr. Squires will surround themselves with familiar belongings. Mr. Nott's personal payload includes cassette tapes by Edith Piaf, Glen Campbell, Elton John, and Bobby Short and a copy of "Henry V."

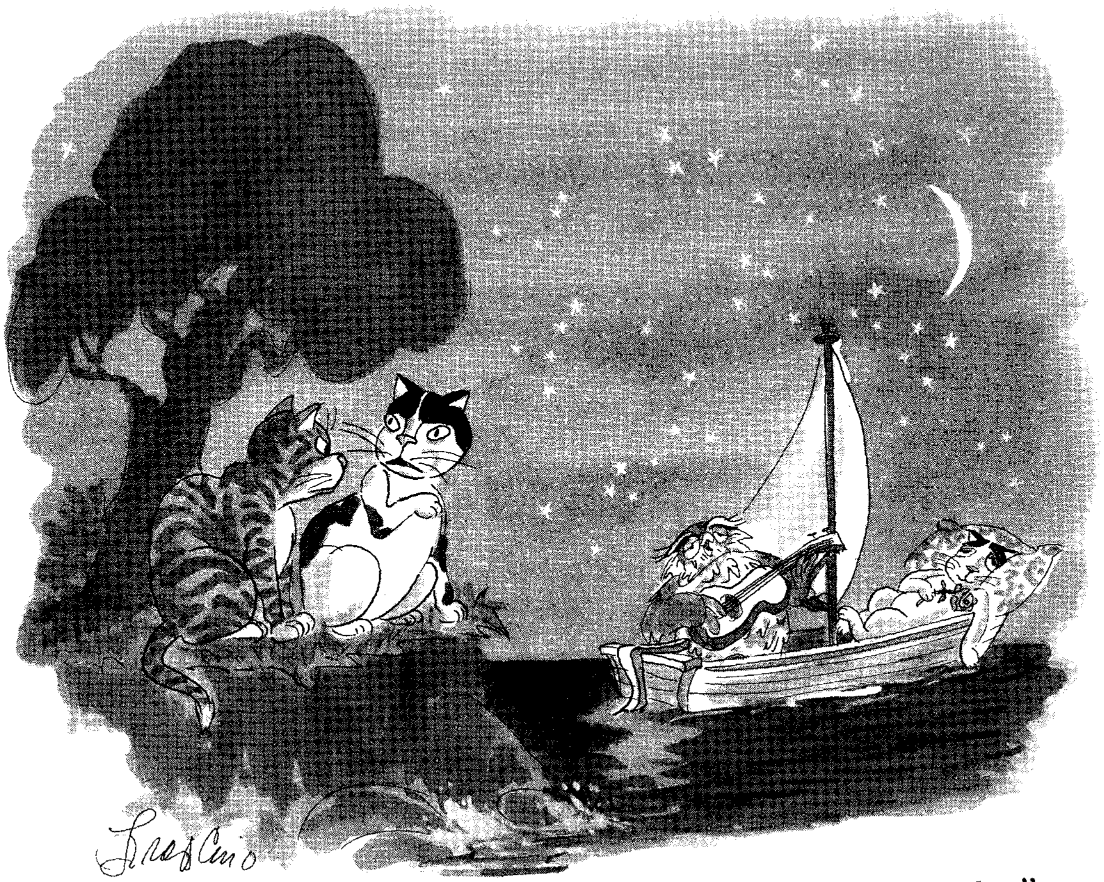
The elaborate preparations have now gobbled up eight full years and eight hundred and twelve thousand dollars. "The ambition is the same but just about everything else has changed," Mr. Nott told us. Three scheduled launchings were grounded as logistics grew tangled and cash ran dry. Fund-raising, Mr. Nott conceded, has been an impediment, and only recently has he learned to romance potential backers with tales of adventure. Manhattan is a more fertile trolling ground for funds than his native London, he said, and he added, "New Yorkers are much more positive about someone who wants to disturb the universe, if only just a little bit."



"Good morning. With a touch of fall in the air, I'm happy to welcome you back from summer distribution in the Hamptons, Bay Head, Nantucket, Chatham, and Northeast Harbor, and to reunite our diverse community—some in preppy garb, some in executive dress, some in the Ivy League look, and some in Wasp attire. My sermon this morning was inspired by Scripture from our 1928 Book of Common Prayer."

Windows

MANY people in SoHo believe that the last truly modernist movement in the neighborhood is the window art of Stephen J. Gerberich. Window art, like all real modernist art, has a complicated relationship, at once affectionate and parodic, with the forces of mechanization, and also a precarious and irony-laden relationship with a capitalist patron—in this case, the guy who owns the window. Stephen Gerberich's art can be found at 472 Broome Street, on the southern edge of SoHo. The building once held a printing company, and it may someday hold people willing to pay in the four-hundred-dollar-per-square-foot range in return for a more than decent write-off situation, but right now it holds only a lot of empty space. In the window, Stephen has for the past two years created meticulously detailed fantasy environments, part Rube Goldberg and part Joseph Cornell, made up of things he has picked up on Canal Street; things he brought with him from his home, in West Des Moines; and things he has bought from dealers in novelty items around the city. In Stephen's window environments, there are usually lots of what the toy companies call "action figures" but what Stephen calls "workmen." There are also electric motors, which power pulleys and belts that make the other things in the windows bounce and jiggle and oscillate. They run until midnight. One of Stephen's first installations at 472 Broome was called "Mass Reduction," and it showed eighteen action figures of professional



"I've been against it from the start, but who am I? Only her mother."

wrestlers working on an assembly line crammed with bottles, cowboys, and small models of the Empire State Building. The bottles were being filled with some foul-looking yellow liquid. On the back wall, brass pulleys turned continuously without actually accomplishing anything. The *Village Voice* reviewed "Mass Reduction" and found it to be a statement that "the more something is reproduced, the less its intrinsic value." Stephen is serious about the allegorical meaning of his work but not *that* serious.

Stephen Gerberich moved here from West Des Moines three and a half years ago. "I had a B.F.A., and I wanted to be an artist," he said recently. "For some reason, I had this kind of thing about windows, but I figured that nobody in New York would be interested in the art of a guy from West Des Moines. I figured that Mary Boone probably had some girl in Japanese clothes working for her whose only job was to keep guys from West Des Moines out of the gallery. So I got a job cleaning out this old printing plant on Broome Street. They had terrific windows, which nobody realized were terrific windows, because they were so full of graffiti and junk and stuff. So after we'd finished cleaning I asked the super if I could do a window installation, and he said sure. The guys who own the building have been great, for the most part. Whenever I get the money together, I take down the old window installation and put in a new one."

Besides "Mass Reduction," Stephen's installations have included "The Milkman," a parody of mechanized agriculture, in which a window-size cow in high-top black sneakers worked an exercise bike in front of a background of multiple cow heads, and "Waiting On the Doc," a nightmarish vision of a doctor's office shown in cross section, with some baby dolls waiting in one room while, in another room, lined with X-rays and a poster of the human skeleton, a family of surgical instruments bounced up and down and gleefully gaped and snipped in anticipation. One that he made in March, 1988, showed a run-down basement room that had a decaying stamped-tin ceiling and was filled with odds and ends of machinery. On the left, a trash can whirled; on the right, some oil cans spun. Vents opened and closed at the back. The window was called "Never Needs Oiling."

Stephen's fame has bounced back to West Des Moines (the Des Moines *Register* recently had an article about the windows at 472 Broome Street right alongside the "Iowa Boy" column), and in the past year he has got a lot of work making mock window displays for people who have seen his art on Broome Street and want something like it. "This guy from France had me over to do a piece for him—a piece that sits in the corner of his house," he said. "It's in Trouville, France. Can you imagine that? Getting from West Des Moines to Trouville by way of a window in an abandoned printing factory on Broome Street? Anyway, I did that, and now all these places have me doing window-type installations for them that they can kind of have around and use as advertising. But they're all window-*type* installations, rather than stuff that actually goes in windows. It's weird. You can get people to pay you for that stuff, but now it looks like I'm not going to have a real window to work on." The owners of 472 Broome Street, it turns out, have decided that they want to rent the ground-floor space behind Stephen's windows, and, presumably, the new tenants will want to put stuff in the window like the stuff they are selling inside. Stephen's most recent window piece may be his last. Its elements include white signs with black letters mounted on motorized strings and dancing in incandescent light; at midnight on Broome Street, the letters are sometimes the only thing that is still moving. They say "Store For Rent."

BERARD'S LUCK

THERE were times when Berard felt himself cursed by a small mistake. Trouble would follow. He tried to live with his bad luck, to wait it out, but bad things just piled up and up until he found himself cataloguing his life, figuring to himself: How did I start this? Where did this begin?

One July night he hit a fox with his Chevrolet and a particular string of bad luck followed. It happened outside Sarasota, on a little farm road that he liked to use as a shortcut home. He was with Grace, his wife, who yelped when the fox slid beneath their headlights. Berard felt the fox hit with the bottoms of his feet. He pulled the car to a stop on the shoulder and looked back.

Grace put her hands over her face. She was pregnant, nearly six months, and she rested her elbows on the slope of her belly, cradling her head in her palms. It was a gesture Berard had seen a lot of lately. Sometimes he woke up at night and found her like this.

"That was too much," she said.

"It was a fox," Berard stated. Behind them, against the light thrown from a distant barn, he could see the silhouette of the animal as it lifted itself again and again. "Oh, Jesus," he said.

Grace kept her hands on her face. "It's still alive, isn't it?"

Berard put the car in reverse. "It's still alive," he said. "Yes."

But when they got to the fox it lay flat on the side of the road, not moving. Berard got out and checked. The fox had a bloody mouth. It was dead. He told Grace, who had stayed in the car, with the windows rolled up.

"Are you sure?" she said. From behind the windshield, her voice came to him with the same metallic ring it had when they yelled to each other underwater. They loved doing that. Years earlier, at the University of Florida's natatorium, he had proposed to her underwater. She surprised him by coming up from the deep end knowing full well what he had said.

He got back in behind the wheel and Grace repeated her question. "Are you sure it's dead?"

"Dead is dead. I know dead."

Though he tried not to think about it, the event pained him the rest of the way home for a number of reasons. He had seen, if only in shadow, the fox's death spasms; it was a young fox, very small, and there had been so little blood. As they pulled away, Grace shot a glance out the side window. "Looks like it's sleeping." Berard ignored her and drove off. But then he wished that he had touched the fox to make sure that it was dead. Even as he pulled into the driveway, he considered turning back to check, but didn't, allowing what he figured was good sense to prevail.

THE next morning Berard's bad luck started in earnest. As he was walking down the street to buy a newspaper, he noticed a rosebush in front of a house four doors from his. The roses were past full bloom, spread so wide and fat that he almost didn't recognize them as roses. He reached down to smell one, taking the stem of the flower between two fingers. But as his nose touched the petals, the flower fell apart in his hands. He hadn't expected that, and when he pulled back in surprise the bush snagged his sleeve and shook, so that the other flowers fell apart, too.

He stood over the ruined rosebush for a moment, then turned and walked on. It was early morning, likely too early for anyone to have seen this happen. But he worried more about the flower falling apart when he touched it, quickly and reliably, like some chemical reaction.

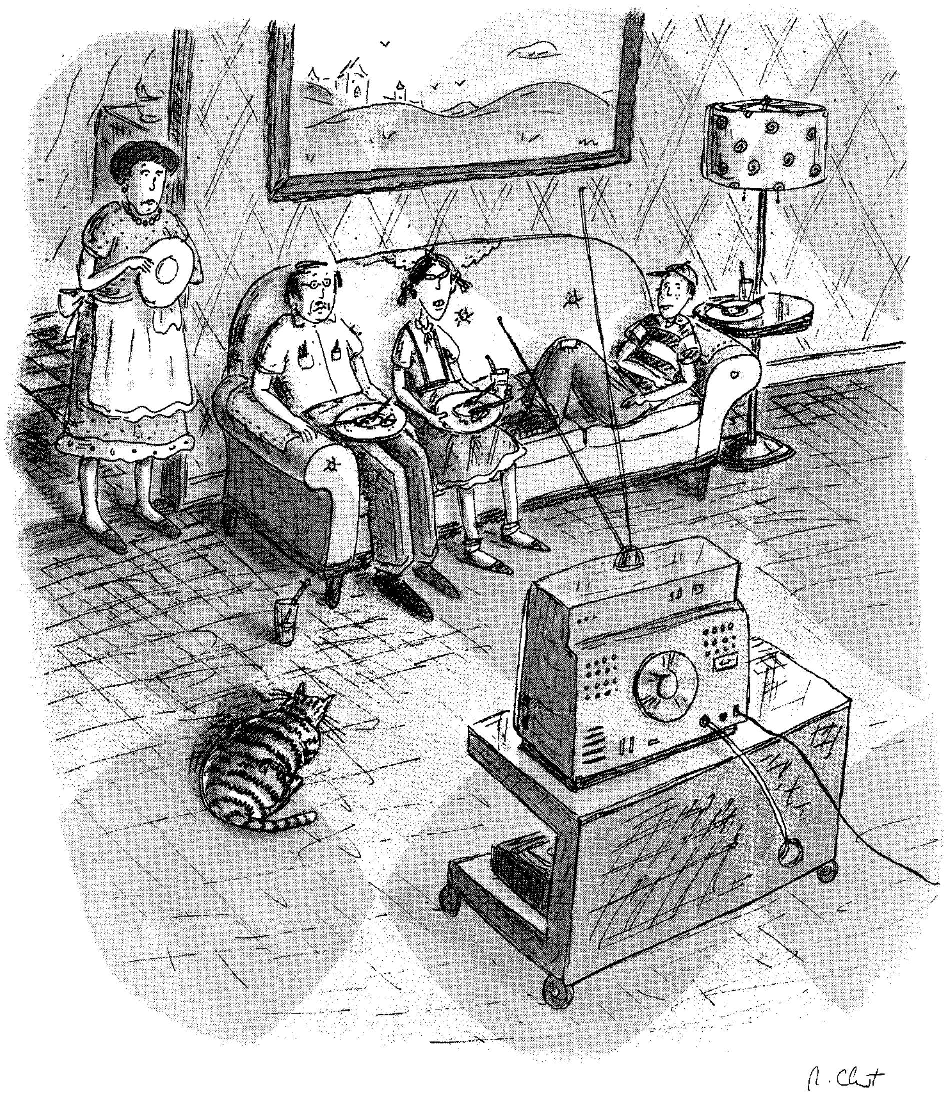
Things got worse. There were no newspapers left at the gas station, or at the grocery store a mile farther down. When he arrived home, thirty minutes later than usual, Grace was still in bed. "My back hurts," she said, without rising. "Where were you?"

When he touched her arm, he felt that she was burning up with fever. He called the doctor, who told him to bring her in to his office right away. He sat Grace up and helped her dress. "Should I be scared?" she asked him. "Should I worry about the baby?" Hushing her, he told her no, not to worry, then buttoned her blouse. The doctor had sounded alarmed, though. Only when he had her waiting on the couch in the living room did Berard return to the bedroom to pack for the hospital.

At noon Grace was admitted to the hospital with what the doctor termed a major kidney infection. They tried to be calm while the doctor talked with them about the possibilities of the infection shifting to the uterus, about antibiotics and fluids, the chances of premature labor. He illustrated every point of anatomy with a mechanical pencil borrowed from Berard, tracing in the air the curving Fallopian

COMMEMORATIVE BUST for...
A GOOD MOVEMENT!!
A FUN MOVEMENT!
SKALISKY
POPISM

tubes, the sloping ureter, then jabbing in the area of the infection. When the doctor left, he took Berard's pencil. Grace was falling off to sleep. "Him and that pencil," she said. "It was making me sick."


SEX, LIES, LEFTOVER TUNA CASSEROLE, AND VIDEOTAPE

GRACE slept fitfully for two days. Her fever fell, then disappeared. Soon the doctor told them that the danger was over. Grace was to stay another week in the hospital, he said, then have another week of bed rest at home. Berard, who had spent two nights in the hospital waiting room, made plans for her return. "You'll need water," the doctor said. "Lots of water." He was talking about water to drink, of course, but for Berard, who had left the house in a rush and had not yet returned, this brought momentary visions of fire. He hurried home.

When he turned into the driveway, the garage door was open. Nothing seemed to be missing or out of place, but the door from the garage to the kitchen was also open. This alarmed him. When he walked into the house, Berard found a large black dog standing in the center of his dining-room table eating the last of some angel food cake off a small plate.

The dog lifted its head and growled. Berard took a step forward and shouted, "Oh, come on! Off the table! Get out of here!" The dog flinched, and growled louder. Then Berard noticed the streams and ribbons of trash all over the carpet in the dining room. He grew furious. He pointed a finger at the door and shouted at the dog. "Out!" he said, and the dog barked, scrambled forward, scratching the hardwood tabletop, then leapt at him.

Berard found himself moving without a thought. He bent one knee, turned back toward the kitchen, and tried to jump for the nearest counter, but the dog's bite caught him in mid-leap. He thumped to the floor and the dog thrashed, pulling at his calf. Berard screamed, kicked with his other leg. For a moment the dog let go, before biting down again, this time higher up, near the knee.

While the dog locked down tighter on his leg, Berard found that he could hear two things: the clicking of the dog's nails against the linoleum and the tearing of his trousers as it pulled him back onto his belly again and again. This gave him the strange sensation that he was hardly a part of this. Even as he kicked and swore and spit, he found that he had to remind himself, "This is happening to me. I'm in the middle of this."

Soon he began playing dead, and the dog stopped thrashing, though its jaws stayed locked. Berard lay still, his head facing away from the dog, and kept one eye on the second hand of his watch. "It didn't hurt," he would tell friends later. "I was just afraid it might never end."

After four minutes and forty seconds, the dog let go. Berard checked himself from taking a breath, from moving even the slightest bit. Fifty-eight seconds later the dog walked far enough away for him to jump to his feet and up onto the kitchen counter. The dog snarled, but did not come at him this time. Berard reached into the dirty dishes in the sink, pulled out a steak knife, and threw it at the dog. He missed, then reached back and threw a jar of sugar, which caught the dog flush in the side. Then a can of V-8. Then a bigger knife. Then a potted plant from the shelf above the sink. The dog leapt back and forth around these things, until suddenly it ran straight out the door.

Berard didn't look at his leg. He could see that it was bad enough from the blood that covered his kitchen floor. Finally he got down, shut the door, and called Quinn, his neighbor, who came over right away. As Quinn wrapped his leg, Berard felt himself grow dizzy. "Is it bad?" he asked. "It feels pretty bad."

But Quinn shook his head, kept his eyes on the job. As he was helping Berard stand, he looked into the kitchen, at the bloody floor. "Looks something like a butcher shop," he said.

"Bloodletting," Berard said, laughing despite himself. "Human sacrifice."

Suddenly, or so it seemed to Berard, they were at the hospital. Quinn stood at the admitting desk talking to a woman with a blue clipboard. Berard was flat on his back on a gurney a few feet away, reading their lips. He could only hear the soft canned music and someone nearby folding paper, stuffing envelopes.

The woman at the desk: "Insurance?"

Then Quinn, shrugging: "I don't know. We share lawn tools."

BERARD'S story made the paper, and while he was in the hospital, with his leg stitched and elevated, someone broke into his house and stole his television set and his coin collection.

At the doctor's request, he sent Quinn out looking for the dog, giving him a detailed description, sketches even. Quinn did his best, posting bills on telephone poles, in gas stations and junk yards, but nothing came of it. The morning paper ran an appeal for word on the dog's health. It did no good. After forty-eight hours the doctors recommended rabies shots. Before the first shot, his doctor squeezed out the air bubbles from his syringe and said, "You're lucky. You'll only have one a week for a month. Used to be one a day for a month." The injections were made into Berard's stomach. He vomited furiously for hours afterward.

QUINN was the first to call it bad luck, and he recommended throwing the I Ching. "It works for my family," he said. "My wife won't even go to the store without throwing those little coins."

But Berard formulated his own plan to bring his life back onto its former plane. Taking several weeks off from work to recover and take care of Grace, he decided to learn to garden, bought several books to that end. This would bring him closer to the earth, he figured, give him a chance to focus. He bought a tray of pachysandra, a large bag of mulch, some fertilizer, and a set of gardening tools, but as he knelt for the first time the stitches in the back of his leg popped. Grace had to leave her sickbed to drive him back to the hospital. "Learn to take care of yourself," she said as they drove. "Try something you can do sitting still. Like chess."

"Bonsai trees," Berard said. "Jigsaw puzzles." He meant to mock her, but she was enthusiastic about his ideas.

"Yes! Or even barbecuing, maybe," Grace said, stopping at a red light. "Do a hooked rug!"

Berard had a dishtowel tied around his leg. He decided that he had been fighting the world. Of Grace's suggestions he liked barbecuing the best. On the way home from the hospital, with his leg newly restitched and wrapped, despite Grace's objections they stopped at a warehouse outlet store. Berard limped over to a forklift.

"I want a grill," he said to the salesclerk, who looked down from the driver's seat sipping a diet soda. "A big one."

"You want a grill?" the salesclerk said. His hair was dirty, mashed down under a plastic hard hat. He squinted one eye at Berard when he talked, as if he couldn't believe what he was hearing.

Berard nodded.

"I think you want a smoker," the clerk said, holding up a single finger. "I don't think a grill will do you right."

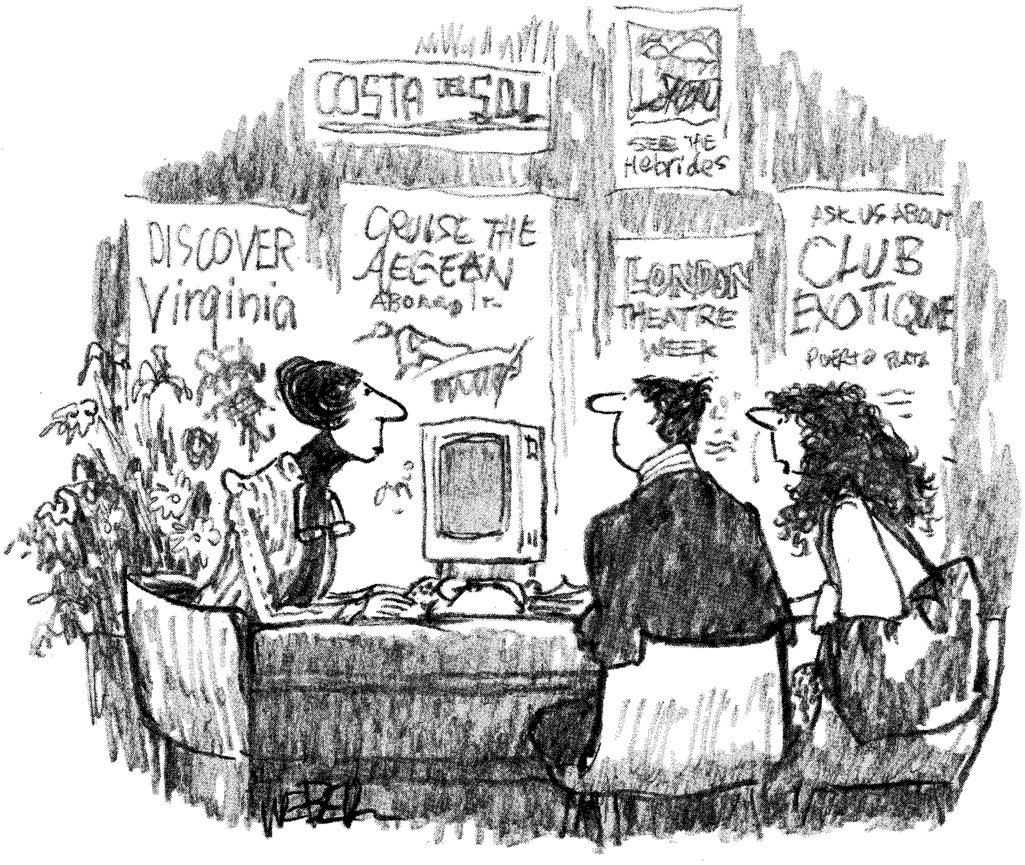
"I want to barbecue," Berard said. Grace was waiting in the car. His leg throbbed. He wanted out.

The clerk leaned down. "Everything's better in a smoker. Chicken, duck. It's so tender it just falls apart." He illustrated his point by balling up his left hand like a small animal, pinching as if to check for doneness.

Berard waved him on. He was in no mood to fight. "Get me a smoker, then."

The clerk put the forklift into reverse. A beeper started up. "You'll be happy," he said. "It's man's greatest invention."

Berard bought the smoker without opening the box, without realizing that he would have to assemble it. Its cylindrical shape surprised him as he put it together on his dining-room table. There were other surprises, too. The smoking process itself was alien to him. According to the enclosed pamphlet—"Smoking



"We've got to get away. Columbus Avenue has us by the throat."

with Pleasure"—it would take an entire afternoon to smoke a chicken. Berard couldn't imagine what to do in the interim. The pamphlet suggested a movie.

He lit the fire in the early morning, set the meats on at noon, and spent the afternoon sitting next to the smoker, contemplating the temperature gauge, which had three readings: Warm, Ideal, and Hot. He smoked pork chops the first night, then ribs, and then chicken. At the pamphlet's suggestion, he experimented with different brands of charcoal in an attempt to better control temperature, and added different woods for flavoring: mesquite and hickory to begin with, but later more exotic hardwoods like cherry and apple. He learned how to smoke cheeses, hard-boiled eggs, corn, and zucchini, and not to peek under the lid of the smoker, as this released too much heat and moisture.

Sometimes he left for an hour or two, as when he went for his rabies shots or to pick up Grace's prescriptions. It gave him great pleasure when he returned to find that all was well with the smoker, that the needle was rock-solid steady between Ideal and Hot.

Neither of them tired of the smoked offerings. For her part, Grace craved Berard's apple-smoked apple slices and never turned her nose up at any of his attempts. She recovered slowly, and Berard, inspired by the timing and pace of the smoker, was patient. He took an extra week off from work, even after Grace was clearly up and around. His stitches had long since been pulled.

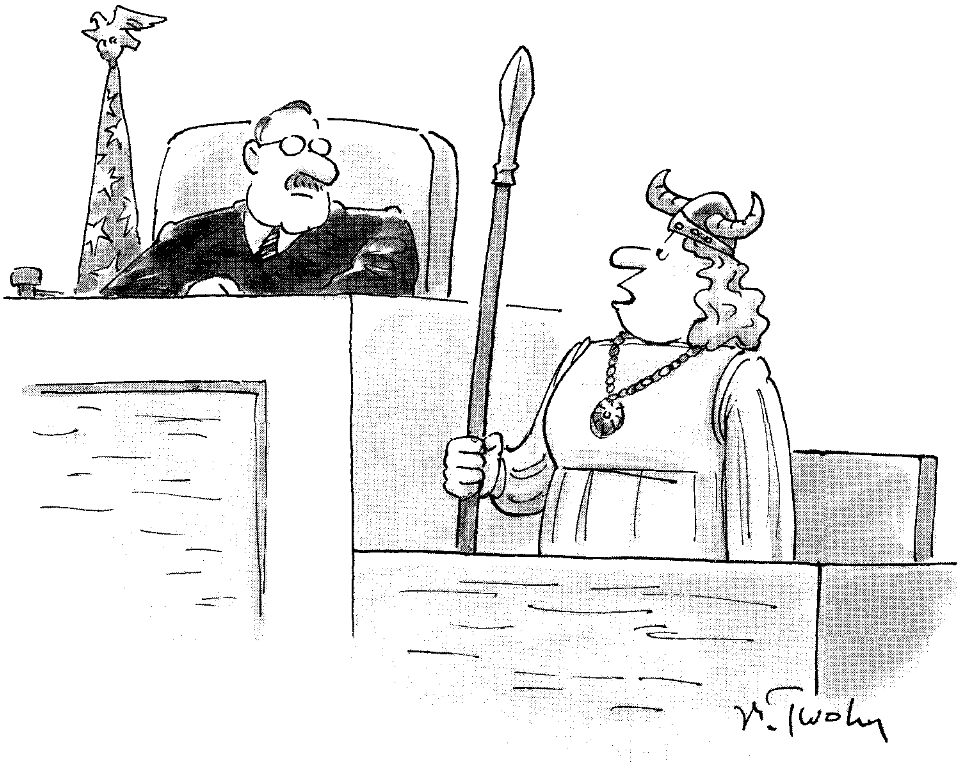
On the day before he returned to work he smoked a beef brisket. They had invited the Quinns for dinner, and at midafternoon Lee, the Quinns' nine-year-old, led a pack of bicycling friends into Berard's back yard.

"What are we having tonight?" Lee said. All around him, his friends made revving noises—motorcycles.

"Brisket," Berard said. "Maybe corn, too. Do you want corn?"

"What is that thing?" Lee said, pointing to the smoker.

"It's a smoker," Berard said. Lee stared dully at the smoker as Berard began explaining its innards. But the boys grew restless, began peeling away. Lee was the last to turn. Berard yelled after him, "The smoker is man's greatest invention." He echoed the salesclerk gladly, gratefully.



"But first, if it please the court, Brünnhilde's farewell to Siegfried from 'Götterdämmerung.'"

• •

THAT night the brisket was a great success, and Berard, giddy with the sense that he had reversed his bad luck, told the Quinns the whole story of hitting the fox and the bad luck that had followed—the roses, the sold-out newspaper, Grace's illness, the dog, the break-in, the shots, the gardening, and the burst stitches. He had told the story in bits and pieces over the past weeks, to everyone who would listen. People tended to commiserate, shaking their heads. "Some luck," "bad luck"; nodding their heads yes, they understood.

Now Quinn and his wife, Annie, sat across the table, a hurricane candle burning between their plates. Annie set down her corncob as Berard finished the story with the smoker, suggesting that it had turned his luck. "It really did the trick," he said, taking a long sip of wine.

"You say a fox started all of this?" Annie asked, picking up a slice of brisket between her thumb and forefinger. She bit down on the meat and pulled at it.

Berard nodded and stood up. Lee was at the corner of the house with a flashlight, looking for lizards under the air-conditioning unit. Berard could see only his sneakers. "Watermelon, Lee! Do you want watermelon?"

Lee shouted something that none of them could hear, and Berard went inside to get the watermelon and a long knife. He took Grace's plate with him. When he got to the kitchen he could hear Annie through the window. "True, true. Very true," she said.

When he came back out with the melon, Annie leaned back in her chair and stared at him. He cut five thick wedges and passed them out. "Which way was it running?" Annie said, when he finally sat down again.

"What?" Berard said.

"Which way was the fox running?"

"Across the road, Annie," Grace piped in. Quinn snorted into a bite of his melon.

Annie waved them off and looked at Berard. "Which way?"

"I don't know exactly," Berard said. "West to east, I guess. Roughly."

"Left to right?" Annie said, taking a large bite of melon. Berard noticed that she had lopped off a good hunk of rind with it.

"I guess so," he said.

At that Annie banged the table with the palm of her hand. Berard looked at Grace in puzzlement. They hardly knew the Quinns. He liked Quinn, though he often seemed moody and he had begun taking Berard's tools without asking. Annie was Grace's friend more than his. During Grace's recovery, Annie brought poultices in the mornings and various teas in the afternoons. She often rubbed Grace's neck. For Berard's wounds she only suggested ice.

Annie set her watermelon down ceremoniously. "In Eastern Europe, the fox is a mischief animal," she said. "So what you're saying really makes sense."

"How so?" Berard said.

"When a mischief animal appears on the left, forget it."

"Forget what?" Quinn said.

"Just forget it is all," Annie said. "You're in for trouble."

Grace nodded. Lee called to his mother from behind the house. Again Berard couldn't hear what he said. Annie stood. "You did the right thing," she said to him. "You centered yourself. You killed off the bad luck."

Berard wanted to believe that. When the Quinns left, with Lee holding their empty casserole on top of his head with both hands like some Indian woman bearing water from a well, Berard waved, and congratulated himself on his instinct. "I was really falling into a hole," he told Grace as they rinsed the plates. "Somehow I knew how to stop myself."

THE next day Berard realized that when he had said that, about falling into a hole, Grace had only shrugged her shoulders and kept working. He let the subject die. In the weeks that followed he told the story less often. His co-workers made excuses to wander off when he did start in. He tried to let the string of bad luck fade from his memory.

Months later he found a thick book called "The History of Luck" at a bookstore in downtown Tampa. It seemed a good gift for Annie, to whom he still felt somehow indebted. He bought and read it quickly, finding nothing whatsoever about Eastern Europe or mischief animals. One chapter focussed on a people who believed that luck had to be maintained. The author compared their conception of luck to an automobile in need of constant tuning. These people chanted all day, to keep their luck going. "They devote every breath to luck," the author wrote. The chants were simple, the book said, so that children could begin them at an early age. There was a list of typical chants, like "We are small creatures" and "We are tossed by the wind." The chants brought to mind the tornadoes he'd heard about as a boy, the ones that lifted a cow from its pasture and deposited it miles away, unharmed, on the median of the interstate. Cows like that never gave milk again.

RIMBAUD

Je reconnais là ma sale éducation d'enfance.

The rain has tormented the child
So he'll have to think of bazaars

That do away with age
And giant winds blowing into books

And rosary beads and orange trees
The child shouting *merde!* . . .

While in the little town of Charleville
A butterfly is entangled with horses

And underneath the hulks of the rotting piers
The song of the water grows . . .

Elsewhere a curtain rises
On fixed bayonets at the Louvre

As civilization mimics her deathwatch
The child skipping off now

Past the riflemen following a dark sun
It is the moon that licks up the rain

Till a grenade smashes the canvases
And the disturbances of love begin

—ROBERT MAZZOCCO

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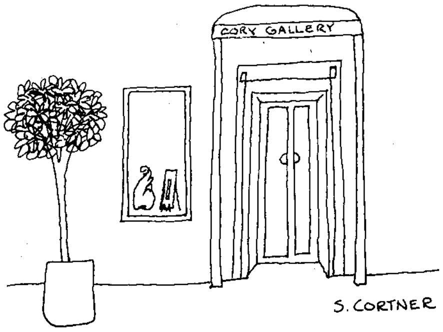


S. CORTNER

The book had one short, self-help appendix, in which the author suggested that bad luck should be charted. "Writing things down," he suggested, "allows the unlucky person a visual thread to which, logically, there must then be a clear and perceptible end."

So Berard took to setting down the string of events for his own benefit, at his desk on a legal pad or in a coffee shop on the curling edge of a placemat. Whenever he wrote out the series, connecting each event to the next with a neat architectural arrow, he found that there were incidents of bad luck that he had not yet thought to add to the list: His mother breaking her foot on the morning Grace went into the hospital. A bounced check that arrived while he was at the hospital. The keloid scar that left his calf looking mangled long after things had healed. At first he wrote these things below the original string like footnotes. When he told the story with these new details, people perceived them as fabrications. No one wanted to hear them. "Every time you tell that story you add something new," a friend told him once at lunch in a steamy courtyard restaurant. "It's beginning to sound like bullshit."

Berard knew then that he could never tell it again. And he didn't. But he kept writing out the string every week or two, now freely adding in any new details that occurred to him. The list changed slightly in each version, except that it always began with the fox and ended with the smoker. Though he told himself the list was only a diversion, he strove for accuracy of detail. He began to see the whole thing as some forgotten formula, waiting to be reconstructed for the benefit of the ages; he would be the scientist, the historian, the neutral observer.

WAITER! WAITER!
Leo Cullum

HIS daughter, Sophie, was born in the fall, and he hardly considered it bad luck that she was slightly jaundiced. The doctor recommended sunlight. "Sit her in the sun for a while," he said. "Sometimes you have to jump-start the liver."

Berard did this gladly, sitting in the back yard next to the cradle in the early morning, when the sun would not burn Sophie. Grace appreciated it, too, since she could sleep late or lie in bed and read. Gradually Sophie grew less yellow, but Berard kept up the routine until the weather got too cold.

One afternoon toward spring, he came home early from work and found that the sun was out. It was plenty warm, but not brutally hot, so he loosened his tie, picked up Sophie, and carried her out to sit with him in the sun. It had been a wet winter. The grass was longer and greener than usual. He spread a blanket and put Sophie down in her infant seat. He then stretched out next to her.

When Sophie fell asleep, he tried to doze, but the Quinns were having an argument next door. Things were loud. Berard heard shouting, then thumping and door-slamming. As he drifted off he found himself considering the structure of their house. How could it be that he could hear into their lives so clearly?

Berard snapped awake when Quinn kicked open the screen door. He sat up and saw Quinn walking determinedly across his lawn toward him. His first thought was that Quinn was leaving, running out. He stood to call out, to stop him and offer counsel.

Quinn came right at Berard and pointed a finger. "A nine-year-old boy!"

They must be having trouble with Lee. Berard looked down at Sophie, who was beginning to stir. He figured he could spare a moment to talk with Quinn, who seemed to be coming over for a gripe session. Sliding his hands into his pockets, he started forward. "What did he do?"

Quinn narrowed his eyes at that and walked straight up to Berard, still shouting. "What do you think he did? They were all doing it!" He came up to within inches of Berard's face. Berard put a hand on Quinn's chest, but Quinn slapped it away. Berard could see Annie then, standing inside the screen door, calling to her husband. Lee was at her side.

"Take it easy!" Berard said, moving a step back and away from Sophie, who was now crying. "Doing what? What are you talking about?"

"Smoking cigarettes!" Quinn shouted, jabbing Berard in the chest. "You told him smoking was the greatest thing in the world!" He jabbed again.

Berard put his hands up, palms out, like a traffic cop. "Stop! I never said that!"

Quinn turned then and called to Lee. "Isn't that right, Lee? Didn't he tell you that?"

"Wait a minute!" Berard said. He could see Lee nodding. "Lee! Annie!" He made a move toward them, but Quinn spun around and gave him a big two-handed shove. Berard stumbled. "What is this? What's going on here?" he said. Quinn took two running steps toward him and hit him with a forearm in the chin.

Berard flew backward. His feet went out from under him. He felt one hand touch the gravel at the side of his house; then his head hit hard against the foundation and he was knocked out. Later he remembered a momentary worry that he had hit the hose spout, that it had buried itself in his head somehow. He remembered that, and Sophie's crying.

HE woke in the hospital, at the entrance to the emergency room, on an ambulance gurney. When he tried to sit up a voice said, "He's awake!" Then a hand pushed him back down flat. Although he couldn't see her, he knew that Grace was there, too, because he could hear that Sophie was nearby, still crying. He tried to be still.

He spent a week in the hospital, with

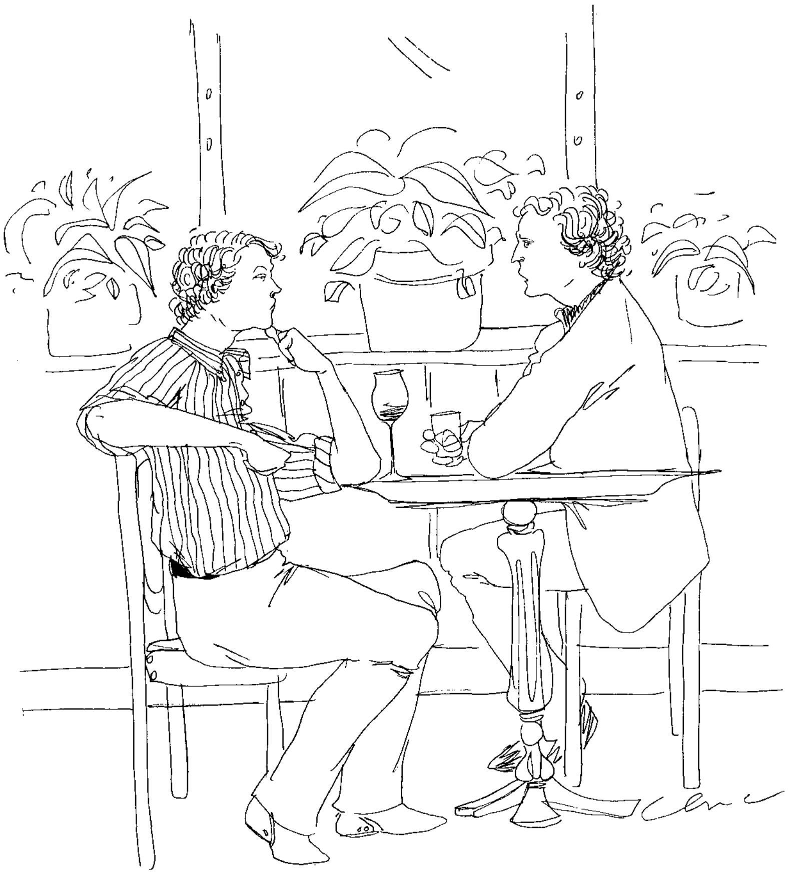
warnings about head and neck injuries read off to him regularly by nurses and doctors. A police officer visited him on the third day and asked if he wanted to press charges against Quinn. Berard said no, that it was a misunderstanding. It had taken him a day or two to figure out that Lee had misinterpreted his remark about the smoker, the salesclerk's line about mankind's greatest invention. He had told Grace, who told Quinn.

"He cried," she reported the next day. "I was so mad I could have spit."

Berard began charting his bad luck again: *Fox→rose→kidney→* and so on. When he got to *smoker*, the usual end of the list, he hesitated, then pencilled in after it "*jaundice*" and then "*fight*." He quickly wrote out the list again. Then again. It now had no natural end.

THE story might go on and on from there, Berard knew—him spinning out his endless string of bad luck. Or he might try to break that luck again. He tried using the chants he had read about, but the repetition was hard to maintain. The book had recommended personal rituals: one cream, one sugar; buttering his toast; warm-ups before running. He remembered that baseball players often touched the catcher's head before leaving the dugout. He brushed Sophie's head with his fingers every morning before leaving for the office. Grace made him stop. "You'll only end up blaming her," she said.

The fight did not prove to make a natural end to the list, in fact. Instead, the list got longer. Berard kept up the charting in a spiral notebook, a page for each entry, first week by week, then day by day. Flat tires. Sprained ankles. Early frosts. Audits. Thrown rods. Paper cuts. Spilled coffee. Bad movies. Leg cramps. Basement floodings. Poor timing.



"*She's very much her own man.*"

After close to a year of this, Grace took over by hiding the notebook away. She treated him like an addict. "One day," she said, half teasing. "Just go one day without it." She returned the book the next day, then took it away again, repeating the cycle over and over. One evening while chopping scallions she told him that she had thrown it out. It didn't bother him.

"Good," Berard said. "Maybe that will change my luck." He went to the refrigerator and pulled out a beer.

"You act like your luck is all bad," Grace said. There was a forlorn tone to her voice. She had long since given up getting angry on the subject of luck. "You have a beautiful daughter and you just got a raise. What kind of luck is that?"

It was true, he had gotten a raise. Another soon followed. They were able to trade up on the Chevrolet and redesign the kitchen. Sophie learned to walk on the day after the new carpeting was installed in the living room. They painted the house, screened in the porch, installed a handsome patio, and hired a landscaper.

One Christmas Grace brought out a large ungainly box with a blue ribbon tied around it. She laughed and set it in his lap. "This is a healing gesture," she said, as Sophie clapped. The black Labrador puppy scrambling around the inside of the box grew to be his constant companion, his loyal defender.

"REMEMBER your bad luck?" Grace asked him a few years later, on the afternoon they learned she was pregnant again.

Berard, recently promoted, shook his head and lifted his wineglass. "Ancient history."

But he did remember. There were days when things came clear and he could recite the list from memory. He considered the string of bad luck to be still there, only hidden now, hanging over him like some jungle net drawn taut by his occasional recitation of the list. He even added incidents from time to time. Now, though, it was a matter of control, he figured.

Each time he started in on the list, he called up the incident with the fox, the feel of its bones as his old car rumbled over it. Once as he was driving the farm road from Sarasota he stopped at the place where he remembered hitting the fox. He did some kicking about in the dry grass there, with no real hope of finding anything. Then he climbed back into the car and sat. That was the trigger, he told himself. It all started here. "Fox," he said as he turned the key. He went on, one word at a time.

SOON after his son, Nick, was born they sold the house. They found a big old place on the Gulf, out in Madeira Beach. The day before the movers came, they had one last party for their neighborhood friends.

Berard hauled the smoker up from the basement and threw a rack of ribs on in the morning. He added two chickens at noon, and vegetables throughout the afternoon. He smoked over a mixture of beer-soaked mesquite and cider-soaked apple wood: it was his own development.

That evening several families arrived all at once, and the house, with packing boxes pushed into the corners and the furniture askew, seemed jolly and full of life. Berard passed out cocktails while Sophie trotted around with a plastic tray of celery stuffed with cream cheese. Grace put on music—fiddles and accordions. To Berard, it brought weddings to mind.

As he stepped outdoors to get the ribs off the smoker, he bumped into Annie Quinn, who was on her way inside with an ashtray in one hand and a drink in the other. Berard and Grace had resumed a tenuous friendship with the Quinns. Quinn had sought counselling for his temper, and with time Berard figured that was enough. Annie blocked the bottom step of the new porch, so Berard moved to one side. "Well," she said, looking up at him. "Are you going to kiss me?"

There were several children lingering on the patio, near the smoker. None of them had heard. Berard knew this was a pass and he chose to ignore it. He liked the evening too much—the milling of bodies, the occasional dance step, the flicker of cigarettes, the scent of mesquite over his lawn. He smiled and shook his head. Annie shrugged.

"You know," Berard said, casting a glance over Annie's head at the smoker, "I never got over what you told me about the fox."

Annie squinted and looked behind her. She called to one of the small boys who had wandered near the smoker. "That's hot, Ryan," she said. "Don't touch." The boy snapped his head up, looked at the smoker and nodded.

"What fox?" Annie said, turning back to him.

"The fox I hit with that old Chevrolet," he said. "Before Sophie was born, when I had all the bad luck."

"You hit a fox?" Annie said.

Berard nodded. Inside the house he could hear that his Nick, his baby boy, had been brought out for a look. "Look at all that hair!" someone said.

"You told me it started my bad luck," he said. "You told me that the fox is a mischief animal."

Annie laughed. "I did not." She moved to step by him. This time he blocked her way.

"You did," Berard said. "You told me that."

She put her hand on his arm and laughed again. "I'm sorry, but I'm sure I made that up. I was into that magic stuff then. I liked thinking that I knew everything."

Berard felt his eyes widen. "You lied?"

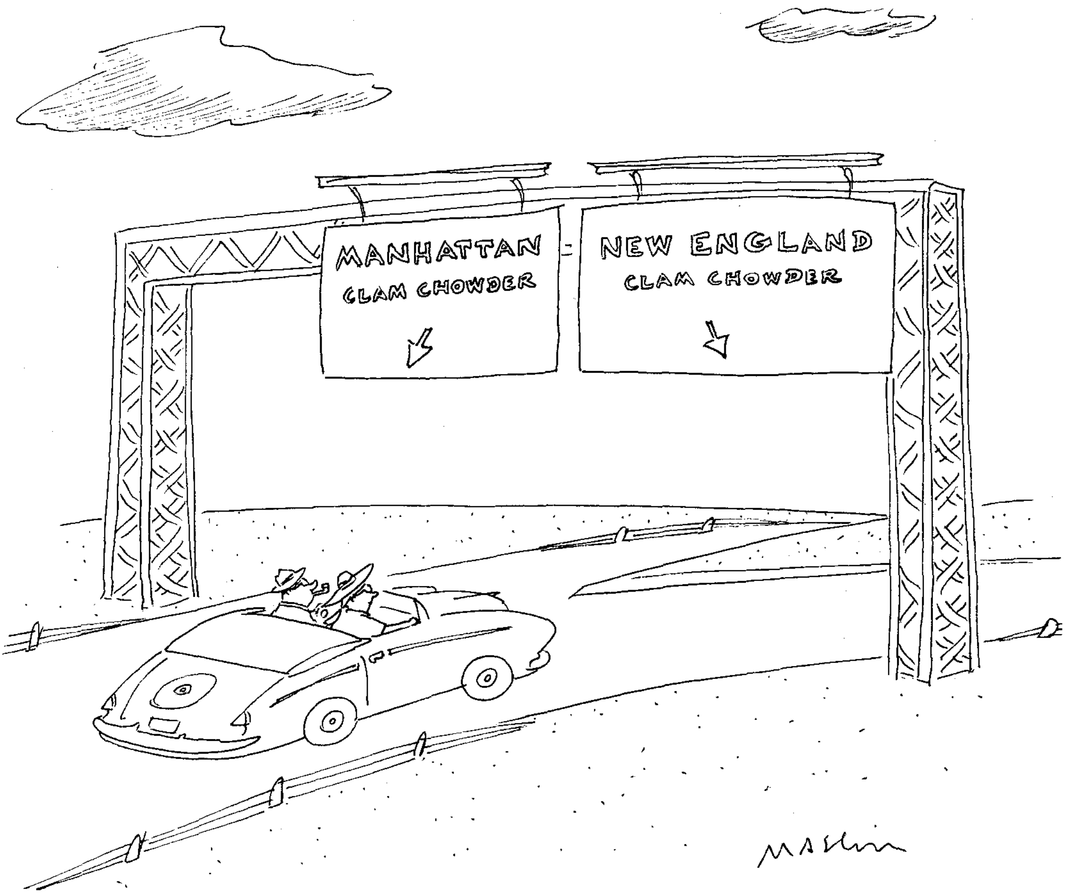
Annie stiffened a little. "Maybe," she said. "It sounds like a lie, doesn't it?"

Berard was silent. Annie was annoyed. "I don't even remember. Maybe it wasn't me. Maybe you just made this up." He said nothing. Annie said his name, shrugged, and went inside. "I was trying to help," she said from around the corner.

"It's O.K.," he said when she was past him. He lifted a tray from a glass table. The news that she had lied didn't make him mad. He tried to start the list again as he lifted the lid to the smoker, but he couldn't. Now it had no beginning.

The children circled around when the smoke cleared. "What are those?" one of them asked, pointing at the foil-wrapped potatoes. "Chicken!" shouted another. "Is that a barbecue?" asked a tiny girl. "Where's the charcoal?" At first, he tried to answer their questions as he forked the food onto the tray, but then he let them talk, their voices rising up all around him. A few of the older kids helped him carry the food inside. As they entered the house, Berard laughed and raised the plate of ribs and chicken for all to see. A cheer went up. There was much backslapping, and a toast to the great good fortune of his family.

—Tom Chiarella



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NEATEST TRICK OF THE THEATRICAL SEASON

[*Photo caption in the Louisville* (*Ky.*) *Courier-Journal*]

Mark Sawyer-Dailey, left, of Actors Theatre of Louisville, has taken on the monumental job of portraying the decapitated Louis XVI.

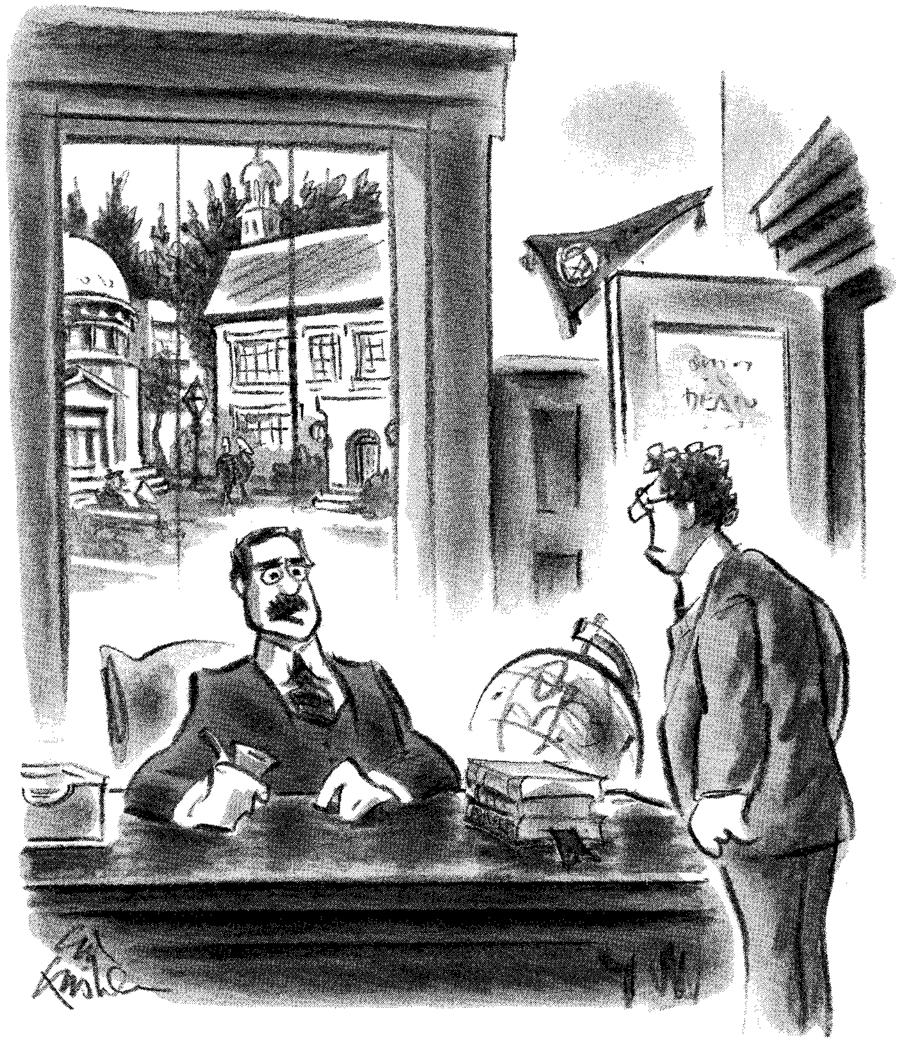
A REPORTER AT LARGE

FIRE

WHEN lightning ignited a fire in the Lamar Valley, in the northeastern part of Yellowstone National Park, on May 24, 1988, nobody thought anything of it. "All fires start small," firefighters often say, and this one, like most, stayed small. Rain fell that day. For the past sixteen years, Yellowstone administrators had been following a "prescribed-natural-burn" policy, which allowed certain lightning-caused fires to burn unhindered. This policy was based on the idea that burning could bring an old and ailing forest back to life. But most of the time, when lightning struck, nothing happened. From 1982 through 1984, for instance, the staff at Yellowstone's fire cache—the headquarters of Yellowstone's resident firefighting teams—reported twenty-eight lightning-caused fires and ten fires credited to people, and in those three summers not a single acre burned. Many people thought that in Yellowstone—where winters are long and severe, summers short and often rainy—you couldn't start a forest fire if you tried. So on June 23, 1988, when, after an especially wet spring, lightning struck again and ignited another fire, this time in the woods near Shoshone Lake, in the southwest corner of the park, the park superintendent, Robert Barbee, didn't think much of it, either. The Shoshone fire was allowed to burn. "Normally, if you get a hundred acres out of a fire in Yellowstone it's something to get excited about," Barbee told me a few weeks later. "I just thought, Well, it's moving into the green stuff, and you've got a couple of meadows down there, so no big deal. A couple of days go by, and then all of a sudden—*kapow!*—you've got a sixty-mile-an-hour wind knocking trees down, and the fire has taken off."

Two days after the Shoshone started, the Fan fire—named after Fan Creek—started, in the park's northwest corner. In the next couple of weeks, fires called the Red, which joined with the Shoshone; the Lava, to the south of the park's administrative headquarters, at Mammoth, in the northwest corner of the park; and the Mist and the Clover, which eventually joined together in the northeastern corner, were burning. All were lightning fires, and all were allowed to burn. On July 21st, by which time seventeen thousand acres (twenty-seven square miles) had burned, the park suspended its natural-burn policy. Donald Hodel, then the Secretary of the Interior, paid a visit to Yellowstone on July 27th and confirmed the suspension, declaring that for the rest of the year all fires would be fought. Yet, in spite of Hodel's decision, a hundred and twenty thousand acres (a hundred and eighty-eight square miles) had burned by the end of July—some five and a half per cent of the park's two million two hundred thousand acres.

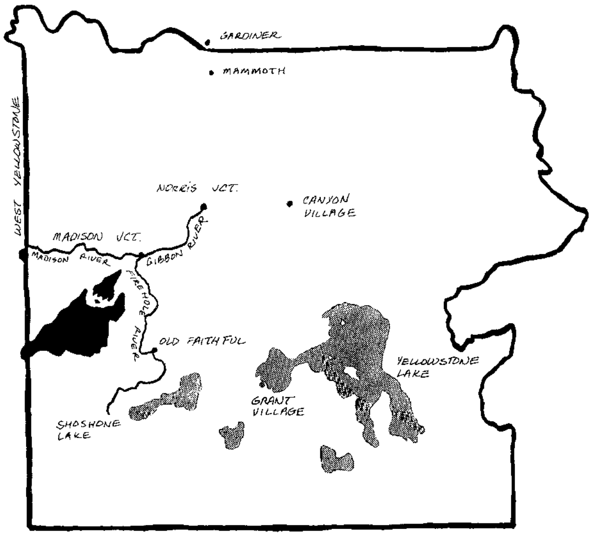
"You have to remember, we didn't anticipate that it would go on like this," Barbee remarked a few weeks later. Throughout the fire season, Barbee, who has worked for the National Park Service for thirty-one years, was the park's front man. He didn't manage the blazes; Yellowstone's fire cache has only limited resources to fight fires, so park rangers usually call on the regional Forest Service office, in Missoula, Montana, to manage their fires—and sometimes, as in 1988, use the nationwide resources coördinated by the Boise Interagency Fire Center, in Idaho. Nevertheless, he put in eighteen-hour days, seven days a week, for about three months over the summer, meeting with congressmen, Presiden-



"The barbarians are at the gates, Frambley, and you talk of tenure!"

tial candidates, reporters, citizens of surrounding communities, the Secretaries of the Interior, of Agriculture, and of Defense, the director of the National Park Service, and the men who actually called the tactical shots on the fires—the incident commanders, who are otherwise known as fire bosses. All that time, he kept hoping that the weather would break. "We've nervously waited for the fronts to come in, and they have come, except they're dry fronts—cold, dry fronts, with lightning and no rain," he told me. "All we need is just a little bit of rain. We'd settle for half an inch—one of those days you always have in the northern Rockies, where it's gray and cruddy and everybody bitches and moans about the weather. That's all we want."

On the day I arrived at Yellowstone, August 9th—about a hundred and ninety thousand acres (two hundred and ninety-seven square miles) had burned by then—the fires still did not seem terribly threatening. I had come from Redding, California, accompanying a group of firefighters called the Redding Hot Shots—one of fifty-one well-trained Hot Shot crews that the Forest Service maintains across the country—who had been called upon late the night before by an incident commander, through the Boise Interagency network, to come to Yellowstone. Three hours after meeting up with the Hot Shots, I was in the park, assigned to the North Fork fire. We were briefed at the North Fork's fire camp, a temporary headquarters, which made use of one of the park's service yards near Old Faithful; it was at such camps all over the park that firefighters ate and slept, and morning and evening briefings were held. By that time, the North Fork fire—named, as all forest fires are, for a geographical feature near the point of origin, which in this case was a tributary of Split Creek, just west of the park—had burned thirty-two thousand acres. That was already more than had been burned by the largest fire in the park's history. (An eight-hundred-and-forty-acre fire would wipe out Central Park, and a fourteen-thousand-acre fire would destroy Manhattan.) But in a park as large as Yellowstone, which occupies the northwestern corner of Wyoming and spills over into Montana and Idaho, the North Fork fire appeared as a small splatter of ink on the maps posted at the North Fork's camp.



The North Fork fire, Yellowstone National Park, August 9, 1988

In 1988, forty-nine fires began in Yellowstone or just outside it. Blame for the North Fork fell on a woodcutter who had tossed a cigarette on the ground a few hundred feet west of the park, in Idaho's Targhee National Forest, six miles south of the Idaho-Montana-Wyoming junction. That was on July 22nd, a hot, dry, windy Friday afternoon, and, with optimum burning conditions, the fire quickly crossed into Yellowstone. The woodcutter, a man named Leland Owens, was one of four partners who had received permits to cut firewood for their private use but in fact made a business of selling the wood during the winter. The woodcutters left behind empty beer and soda cans and cigarette butts after a day's work. One cigarette, traced to Owens by a saliva test, ignited the duff at the bottom of a wooded draw that faced the southwest wind and the hot afternoon sun. Within an hour, seventy-five acres had burned.

The area where the North Fork fire originated is about ten miles west of Old Faithful, the park's biggest attraction. Just about everybody who visits Yellowstone visits Old Faithful. The geyser itself was, of course, not endangered by fire, but the Old Faithful Inn, which is eighty-five years old, was. It is the largest and, some say, the handsomest log building in the world. The threat to it became immediate national news, yet after an initial attack by the firefighters (and in contravention of the policy change) a Forest Service spokesman assigned to the fire at the time said, "Basically, we've decided to allow nature to take its course."

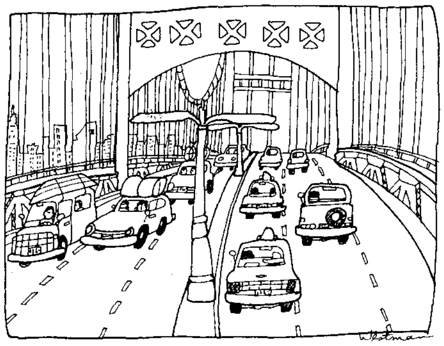
"That's preposterous," Barbee said when I mentioned this statement. "The decision to pull the crews off has been interpreted as 'Oh, well, they're going to let it go.' But that's not the case at all. We went to Area Command"—a temporary outfit, at the airport in West Yellowstone, Montana, that the regional Forest Service office set up after the number of fires multiplied and the acreage for each enlarged, to oversee all the fires in the region—"and they gave us three options. One was just to let it burn and take it at Old Faithful. Another was to try to put a line around the whole thing, and that would cost *x* million dollars. The last was to secure the south and east flanks, to keep the fire out of Old Faithful, and to let it free-burn to the north and hope that it would rain, but if it didn't we could tie it off at the Madison River. They told us that if we tried to circle the fire with a bunch of crews working in front, and we got a big wind, we were likely to kill a bunch of people. So you rule that one out. And then you rule out the option of 'Well, we're just going to sit back and watch this thing.' And I thought it made the most sense to pursue the option where you secured the south and east flanks and let it free-burn to the north. If we got rain, then we could go in and attack it; otherwise, we'd let it burn to the Firehole and Madison Rivers, and we'd tie it off there."

So Barbee's stated objective was to contain (though not control) the North Fork fire, which had climbed the western slopes of the roadless Madison Plateau—isolated, untravelled country. Driven by the winds, the front of the North Fork fire had aimed straight for the bluffs at Madison Junction, where the plateau ends abruptly with a three-hundred-foot drop at the confluence of the Madison, Firehole, and Gibbon Rivers. Crews constructed fuel breaks, or fire lines, along the south and east flanks of the fire, and also along the park's western boundary, and then positioned themselves near the fire's head, checking its progress with occasional backfires. But a drizzle dampened the fire on July 28th, and Area Command declared the Old Faithful area out of danger and kept only six hundred and eighty-five firefighters there. A team of experts in fire-behavior analysis ("the best this country has to offer," Barbee said) had by that time completed a long-term prognosis, which said that, given normal weather—the usual August rainstorms—the fire, if it went unfought, would not reach the northwest edge of the plateau, at a confluence of rivers and roads at Madison Junction, before the end of the summer. And even if it did, as Barbee pointed out, fire would have difficulty crossing the Madison River, to the north, and the Firehole River, to the east.

YOU hear a lot of military humor on the fire lines, and the remark that fire crews use most is "Hurry up and wait." I went out with the Redding Hot Shots on August 11th, and we did nothing all morning but lie around in a staging area, a matted short-grass meadow on the east bank of the Firehole River. A makeshift heliport had been set up there, between a service road and the river, and three Chinook helicopters sat idle in the grass: smoke from the previous day's burning, to the west, pressed down on the flats and choked the sky, keeping them grounded.

The Redding Hot Shots were one twenty-man crew in what was at the time a six-hundred-and-forty-five-man militia—eighteen crews, most with some twenty firefighters—that had been called to the North Fork. At the heliport that morning, I talked to crews from the Sento Domingo Indian reservation, in New Mexico; the Fort Hall Indian reservation, in Idaho; Greybull, Wyoming; Silver City, New Mexico; Lake Tahoe, California; and the Utah State Prison. (The men in the prison crew called themselves the Flame-in-gos; a few nights later, one of them raped a female firefighter in camp, and the crew was sent back to prison.) Most fire crews are made up of athletic college-age boys, but the Redding Hot Shots were men and women, mostly in their thirties and married, with full-time careers in the Forest Service or the Bureau of Indian Affairs. They took their orders from an incident-command team: the fire bosses—the generals—who had done their time in the ground-crew ranks and were now, in most cases, career Forest Service employees free-lancing each summer in what they call the fire game. Not far away from the meadow where the crew was awaiting its orders, a herd of elk grazed and mingled with a herd of buffalo. The crew members read, played cards, batted at gnats, or slept.

By one that afternoon, the sun had forced its way through the haze, and the helicopters whined, wound up, squealed, and thumped into the air. We flew west over burned-out patches on the Madison Plateau and landed in Buffalo Meadow, or Helispot 12. The maps in the fire camp showed the meadow to be within the fire's perimeter and included it in the total burned acreage, but in fact the meadow hadn't been burned; it was just a dry, bleached-out brown—evidence that, as Yellowstone's public-affairs office maintained, the figures for the burned acreage were overstated. Wind-driven fire skips and dashes and runs in elongated finger patterns across the landscape, and within burned perimeters patches the size of several city blocks may remain untouched. A detailed fire map would be as craggy and intricate



RED POPPY

That linkage of warnings sent a tremor through June
as if to prepare October in the hardest apples.
One week in late July we held hands like holding hearts
through the bars of his hospital bed. Our sleep
made a canopy over us and it seemed I heard
its durable roaring in the companion sleep
of what must have been our Bedouin god, and now
when the poppy lets go I know it is to lay bare
his thickly seeded black coach
at the pinnacle of dying.

My shaggy ponies heard the shallow snapping of silk
but grazed on down the hillside, their little prayer flags
tearing at the void—what we
stared into, its cool flux
of blue and white. How just shaking at flies
they sprinkled the air with the soft unconscious praise
of bells braided into their manes. My life

simplified to "for him," and his thinned like an injection
wearing off so the real gave way to
the more than real, each moment's carmine
abundance, furl of reddest petals
lifted from the stalk and no hint of the black
hussar's hat at the center. By then his breathing stopped
so gradually I had to brush lips to know
an ending. Tasting then that plush of scarlet
which is the last of warmth, kissless kiss
he would have given. Mine to extend a lover's right past its radius,
to give and also most needfully, my gallant hussar,
to bend and take.

—TESS GALLAGHER

• •

I THINK I'm canned, I THINK I'm canned, I THINK I'm...
Shanahan

THE LITTLE PRESERVATIVE THAT COULD

as a map of the Maine coastline. We stood for a while, tools in hand, hard hats and gloves on, ready to work. The crew leader, Elizabeth Little—a tall, imposing woman—stood on a knoll studying a map and waiting for our orders to come over her walkie-talkie. They didn't come right away, so we lounged around, ate our lunches, and got some sun. Then the helicopters returned, and we got back on. "Hurry up and wait," someone said.

This time we flew into a smoky war zone. As we bounded out of the helicopter and gathered equipment, I asked one of the men in the Redding crew if he knew where we were. He said, "Are you serious?" and repeated my question to the rest of the crew. Someone explained that we were back in the place where we had spent the whole morning—at the heliport along the Firehole River. But in the hour we were gone the landscape, though so far unscathed, had been smothered under a low cloud of black smoke, and now only the buffalo and the elk were immediately recognizable. The meadow lay under a sombre pall reminiscent of a solar eclipse. Certain colors caught a strange light, and our fluorescent-orange hard hats stood out vibrantly against the charcoal-gray backdrop. Between the helicopters' taking off and landing, I could hear, perhaps a mile away, a deep rumble, like the sound of the ocean, but the smoke was too thick for me to tell whether the fire was nearby or far away.

We marched about a mile down the service road, and then snaked, single file, through a stand of lodgepole pines to the grassy riverside. Beth Little decided to begin the fire line in an area of blackened, burned grass. A man called Tank, second-in-charge of the crew, said that from there we would work through the sparse timber, cutting a line, parallel to the river, that was supposed to halt the fire before it reached a highly flammable pine stand loaded with dead and downed trees near and beyond the service road. Then we went to work. The sawyers, in the lead, buzzed away with chain saws; the swampers, whose job is to clear away any possible fuel for the fire—slash, sagebrush, loose branches, old logs, and just-cut timber—began making a lane; the rest of us began cutting a line, hacking and digging and raking through the hard topsoil to the mineral soil. One person chopped at the ground with a Pulaski (a combination axe and hoe named for a heroic Forest Service ranger); a second person took a further dig at the loosened earth with a shovel; a third scraped a line with a heavy-duty rake-and-hoe combination called a McLeod. In this way, we began cutting a foot-wide firebreak that was meant to slow the advancing front coming down off the eastern slopes of the Madison Plateau.

And for an hour, with the heat bearing down and the smoke often unbearable, we cut perhaps a quarter of a mile of line through the pines. The line seemed to me a mere scratch in the dirt, and I had a hard time understanding what good it could do against a fire that could leap the river. The plan, someone said later, was to tie in with a line that a crew ahead of us was cutting, and then, as the flames came closer, to ignite backfires and rob the inferno of fuel. But as the fire jumped over the river we could feel its wind whirling and whipping. Three-hundred-foot flames—rising three times as high as the tallest trees—lashed at the sky. Firebrands ignited small fires, called spots, beyond our line. A fallen tree caught an ember in its tangled, exposed roots, and before anybody could throw water or dirt on it the log was consumed by flames. A snag—a tree that is standing but dead—burned like a candle for a few moments, and then all its brittle branches fired up like a torch. A woman behind me kept yelling, "Bump up! Bump up! Let's go! Let's work!" I was winded, though, and, because I was swinging a Pulaski, was also having trouble keeping my safety glasses on. The smoke seared and scalded my mouth and throat; my eyes teared and my nose ran uncontrollably. The roar of flame grew so loud that I could hardly hear a warning that someone called when a snag crashed less than ten feet away.

Even with all the advances in

"Mom baby!"

firefighting—the use of aerial retardants, of helicopters for waterdrops and helitorching, of explosives, of improved backfiring techniques, and of mechanisms to induce rain—there is almost nothing that can be done to contain, let alone extinguish, the kind of fire we faced while we were digging the fire line. Within five minutes, the blaze had coalesced into a firestorm—the kind that has been studied in the interests of knowing what would happen in the first hour or so of a nuclear war—and as the twisting winds sucked the surrounding air and drafted upward in a tight convection column the fire seemed to gather still more energy and power. It was as if we were standing on the fringes of a hot tornado.

The intensity of the flames soon forced the crew to abandon the line, and we turned our attention to pouncing on as many small spots as we could. An unnoticed spot could quickly crown, or jump, into the upper canopy, spreading rapidly from one treetop to the next, and move toward the main front, trapping us. If that had happened, we could have opened our fire shelters—aluminum-foil-and-fibreglass cloths shaped like pup tents and able to withstand heat up to 1,400 degrees Fahrenheit—and climbed in, lain on the ground, and waited for the flames to pass. We could have also, if possible, retreated "into the black"—into the charred wake, where the burning was complete. But, of course, neither of these options was without risk.

Amid the riot of falling trees, a woman called Christie shouted to me, and she and I slipped through the fire and into the black. I know that's what we did, but even an hour later it still seemed unreal. I remember being sure to walk—not panic and run—down the fire line with Christie toward our anchor point, keeping my head up, watching for falling snags, and being blinded by smoke. And I remember gasping for breath in the scorched open space where we had begun the line. Over a walkie-talkie Christie heard from Beth Little that she and the rest of the crew had retreated from the fire and were near the service road. We waited a minute or so in the pall of smoke, trying to catch our breath, and then, when the wind seemed to abate, we trudged back up the line to where we'd left off. But we hadn't been there more than a minute before somebody—somebody flying over in a helicopter—got Beth on the walkie-talkie, and she pulled us off the line. Quickly, we beat it out of the woods—back to the service road and out into the meadow, where we could breathe.

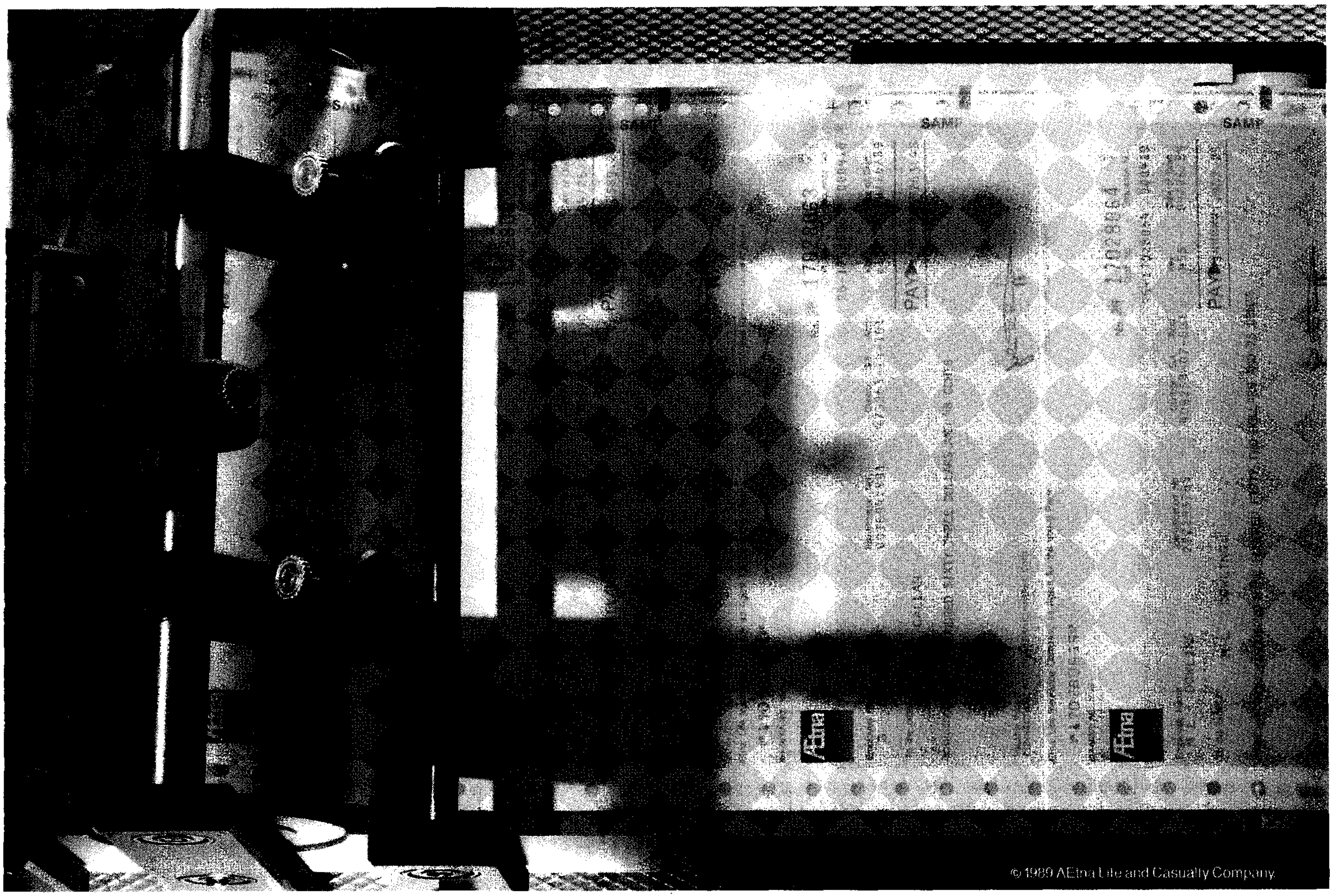
As the crew members set to sharpening their chain saws and their Pulaskis, a red pickup truck arrived. A short, burly man got out and said to all of us, "This is the most radical fire behavior I've ever seen."

I asked him to elaborate.

"You were out there jamming line—you could see for yourself that it looks bad," he said. He was Joseph Carvelho, who was the operations chief of the North Fork—the commander of the forces. "I've been doing this for twenty-three years, and this is just the ultimate. So O.K., it crossed the Firehole River—it's going big-time! But there are things for us to do. If it wants to come across the meadow, let it. But we've got to hold it at the highway now."

BY three o'clock, the fire had raced out of control, burning thirteen thousand acres by the end of the day. That afternoon, Bob Barbee put in a call to Area Command for one of the Forest Service's Type One Incident Command teams, and that night, in the fire camp, Carvelho had to brief his replacements. There are only sixteen Type One teams in the country, and they are not called upon unless a fire threatens lives or valuable property or requires the management of hundreds—sometimes thousands—of firefighters, and dozens of helicopters, airplanes, and engines. The team that Carvelho belonged to, a Type Two team, which typically deals with smaller, quieter, more manageable fires, had been called out about a week before, when the drizzle temporarily tamed the North Fork. The new team, led by a longtime Forest Service employee named David Poncin, had just finished two weeks of fighting the Red-Shoshone fires—also called the Snake River complex. The team had more or less let the fire do what it wanted (in accordance with the park's natural-

The check really is in the mail.



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AETNA. WE GIVE NEW MEANING TO THE WORD DILIGENT.

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burn policy), but had protected the buildings—especially a resort at Grant Village, on the southeast shore of Yellowstone Lake. Poncin left that fire with a "positive feeling," he said later, that he and his team had accomplished their job. But the fires hadn't actually been put out, and a few weeks later the Red-Shoshone got back on its feet, and Grant Village was forced to close for the summer.

On the North Fork, Poncin's group again had the job of looking out for campgrounds and a few buildings, including the Old Faithful Inn, but they were also told to contain the fire, to keep it from moving east toward Old Faithful, north toward Madison Junction, and west toward the Targhee National Forest boundary. The fire would be allowed to burn within certain limits—burning the pockets of unburned fuel on the plateau, if it wanted—but not beyond them.

After a transitional briefing in which Carvelho and (on behalf of the superintendent's office) Joseph Evans, one of the park's four district rangers, outlined these objectives, I talked to Poncin in the fire camp's mess tent. Poncin, who is fifty-two, is tall and has the loose but slightly creaky swagger and slump of an old athlete. In his younger days with the Forest Service, he had been a smoke jumper—a firefighter who specializes in parachuting into remote, often dense forests and starting an initial attack on a fire. When he's not battling forest fires as an incident commander, Poncin is the fire, recreation, and lands staff officer in the Nez Perce National Forest, in Idaho. As we talked, buses of fire crews rumbled in after an evening of mopping up spot fires. Sooty, bleary-eyed firefighters lined up for pork chops and stuffing and ate slowly and quietly, hunched over their plates. It was after ten—late for the fire camp—and by now cold, so Poncin and I had a cup of coffee to stay warm.

I brought up the park's natural-burn policy, and asked Poncin what he thought of the job he had to do here.

"As a Type One team, we seldom get called out on anything less than a million-dollar fire, and this one has cost right around four million already," he said. "But then, these Yellowstone fires are different. We've spent eighty years putting fires out, developing the Smokey Bear thing, and saying fire is just plain bad. And, sure, if you're into logging, of course fire is a villain. But in a wilderness area like Yellowstone, where you're trying to keep something natural, you can't do without fire. If this fire were being suppressed—and by that I mean 'Let's put this baby out, let's do the job'—they'd have been flanking it all along, and then, as soon as we got the chance, we'd be able to head it off. But in this case, fine—the Park Service needs to take advantage of the opportunity of the burning."

We finished our coffee and got up from the table, walking past empty Ryder moving vans, which served as offices for the business of managing the forest fire—keeping track of finances, personnel, resources, and supplies. At a service garage, where photocopying, mapping, and briefings took place, Poncin and his team were gathering for a quick closed meeting. He told me that he and the six section chiefs and their deputies in his incident-command team (for finance, logistics, safety, supply, air support, planning, and fire-behavior analysis, and two for operations) liked to meet once a day to compliment and criticize one another, a practice that they feel strengthens the unity of the team. Among the less personal items on the agenda was a plan to move the fire camp, which was half an hour's drive away (much too far) from the head of the fire. Things were pretty quiet now—some of the firefighters sat by glowing heaters called salamanders, but most had gone to sleep—and while we still had a minute Poncin and I stood in the warm light of the garage and went on talking.

"The problem is with a philosophy of natural management in a *near*-natural environment," Poncin said. "You've got a park that's two million two hundred thousand acres, but you've also got something like forty thousand visitors coming through those gates each day. In my estimation, that takes the park out of a natural-management philosophy altogether. I'm not saying the park isn't doing what it should be doing, but I am saying that, like most fire teams, we're suppressionists—we feel that unless we put the fire out we haven't done our job."

If you enter Yellowstone from the park's north gate, just outside the honky-tonk town of Gardiner, Montana, and drive up dry, grassy slopes that in late summer turn pink and purple just before sunset, you'll pass through the Roosevelt Memorial Arch, which has the inscription "For the Benefit and Enjoyment of the People." Whenever the purpose of the park is disputed, as it was in the summer of 1988, the inscription invariably comes to somebody's mind as hard evidence in favor of the argument that the first priority of the park is the enjoyment of the people who visit it. Yellowstone, the world's first national park, wasn't conceived as what Barbee calls "a repository of naturalness." In fact, some of the founders, who spoke of its "wild, weird beauty," hoped that it would someday become America's Riviera. In 1870, a Montanan named Nathaniel Pitt Langford organized the first successful government-endorsed expedition into this part of the country, which had long remained terra incognita, and, after seeing the upper and lower falls of the Yellowstone River, Yellowstone Lake, and the geyser basin around Old Faithful, a member of the expedition, Cornelius Hedges, had an idea that "the whole of it ought to be set aside as a great National Park." Langford, agreeing, predicted that "the march of civil improvements will reclaim this delightful solitude, and garnish it with all the attractions of cultivated taste and refinement." Though Langford soon became a tireless campaigner for the world's first national park—and he was its first superintendent, from 1872 to 1877—wildlife conservation as we think of it today was not what he had in mind: hunting big game was seen as one of the park's main attractions, and in order to persuade Congress that preserving the land wouldn't be wasteful he had teamed up and lobbied with the

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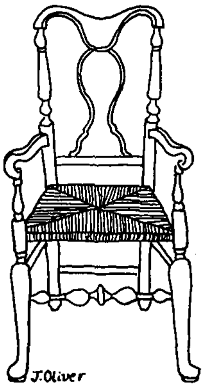
Northern Pacific Railroad, which hoped to run tracks into the park and someday make a killing from tourism.

It might have been better if Yellowstone hadn't been called a park—if it had been called, say, a preserve—for this parcel of land is larger than Delaware and Rhode Island put together. Although two and a half million tourists visit Yellowstone each year, the park is also the habitat of buffalo, black and grizzly bears, deer, elk, moose, bighorn sheep, and transient wolves, among other species. Indians, who had traditionally avoided the geysers because they thought spirits inhabited them, described Yellowstone as unfinished. Even now, there is something primordial about the park. It sits on one of the hottest spots on earth, with intense volcanic activity stewing below, and with more geysers, hot springs, mud pots, and steam vents than exist in all the rest of the world. An ill-defined caldera, or giant crater, that pocks the heart of the park has been following a cycle of heating and bulging and exploding every six hundred thousand years. It has been estimated that the most recent eruption—about six hundred thousand years ago—released more than a thousand times the explosive power of the Mount Saint Helens blast, covered much of the United States in ash, and blotted out the sun for about a year. The caldera is puckering again, and scientists suspect that it is due to erupt soon—perhaps within the next few hundred thousand years.



Before Congress approved plans for the park, in 1872, it had to be convinced that Yellowstone, however wondrous, was essentially worthless, unprofitable land. (If geothermal power had been thought practical then, chances are that Yellowstone wouldn't be a park today.) A few decades later, even in the midst of almost unstoppable land grabbing throughout the West, the idea that nature and wilderness had value in and of themselves began to seep into the American consciousness. In 1916, the National Park Service Act officially declared the need to "conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." What may strike us as a conflict today—between providing "for the enjoyment" and "conserv[ing] the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life"—perhaps didn't seem so in 1916, when tourism was light. Still, the legislation was confusing; many people have speculated about, for instance, exactly what the lawmakers meant by "unimpaired." Does a hotel or a road impair a park? How about a hydroelectric dam? Or forest fires? "What is the agreed-to manifesto, the list of sovereign principles that guides all parks?" Bob Barbee has said. "Have you read the National Park Service Act? What does it mean?"

Most people seem to think of Yellowstone not as a place in which to commune quietly with nature but as a vacation mecca. Still, the park is also the largest wildlife preserve in the continental United States; the largest preserve in a temperate climate anywhere in the world, cited by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization for the "global value of its ecosystem and gene pool"; and the only place in the world where herds of buffalo still range freely. In Yellowstone, you can follow a grizzly bear's tracks in the ash after a fire. Or you can stop your car in the middle of the highway at five in the morning to take a picture of a few hundred grazing elk, and you may just then hear the howl of a wolf down the road. In Yellowstone, where you feel the immediacy of wilderness, where you make sure not to bring food into your tent for fear of hungry bears, wonderful and dangerous encounters with nature are possible.

A lot of people have come to the conclusion, by various routes, that such experiences are what Yellowstone is all about. Bob Barbee may sometimes wind up a discussion by saying, "Naturalness—that's what Yellowstone is all about." Then he may pause and say, "Yellowstone is a social concept of land use which tries to preserve and conserve naturalness to the greatest extent possible." But he may add, "Yellowstone is here only because of people. Its only contribution to society has to do with its relevance to humanity." A minute later, he may throw up his hands and say, "To say it's all about any one thing begins to fall apart. I say naturalness, but really it's all about all those things we say it's all about."

About fifty years ago, guided by the idea that a place like Yellowstone is all about wilderness, the national parks stopped killing predators such as wolves and cougars (but not before they were pretty much eliminated). In Yellowstone, rangers and ecologists no longer feed bears or elk, no longer reseed the range, no longer kill buffalo or elk when it is thought that their population has expanded beyond the carrying capacity of the range. All the same, wildlife managers have been reluctant to let nature manage itself. "We think, My God, how did nature get along without us?" Barbee says. The Leopold Report—a 1963 Department of the Interior report from the Advisory Board on Wildlife Management, headed by the University of California–Berkeley zoologist A. Starker Leopold—traced some of the rudimentary fault lines of the park system and broke trail toward natural regulation. The parks were refuges, the report said, not zoos, resorts, hunting grounds, or playgrounds. Though the report conceded that it was necessary to manage the habitat, it concluded that "above all other policies, the maintenance of naturalness should prevail." While not yet giving nature full license to manage itself (Leopold and his colleagues encouraged herd cropping and favored prescribed burning over natural fires), man had loosened his grip. Not long after the report came out, natural regulation emerged with the idealistic conceit that, although the parks might never again be completely natural, one such as Yellowstone could be managed—or, rather, not managed—to allow the wild setting to act as it would under primitive conditions. And that meant, of course, that fires would have to be tolerated.

In Barbee's opinion, fires serve as "a catalyst" to raise probing questions about the role of parks and wilderness in American life. "What do the American people want of these places?" he asks. "Are the national parks going to be tree museums or big rustic fun farms or jumbo safari parks where things are artificial and contrived? Are they going to be dipped in formaldehyde? Or are they going to be relatively wild

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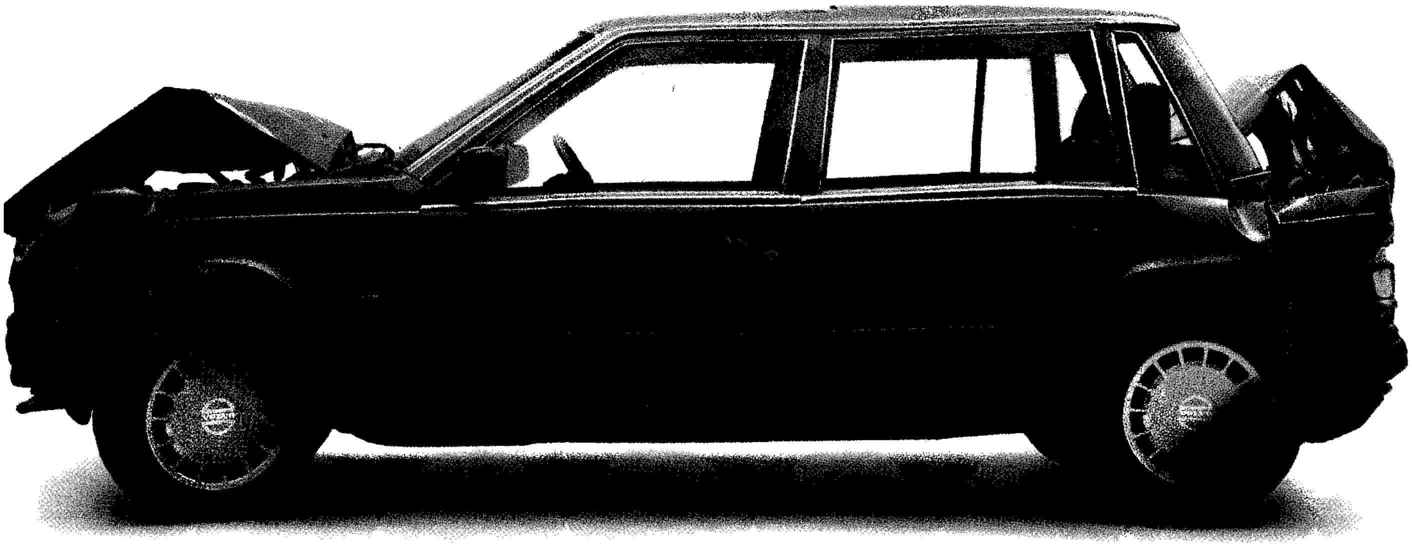

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places, where wildlife lives, and processes like fire can play themselves out? Is scenery greenery?"

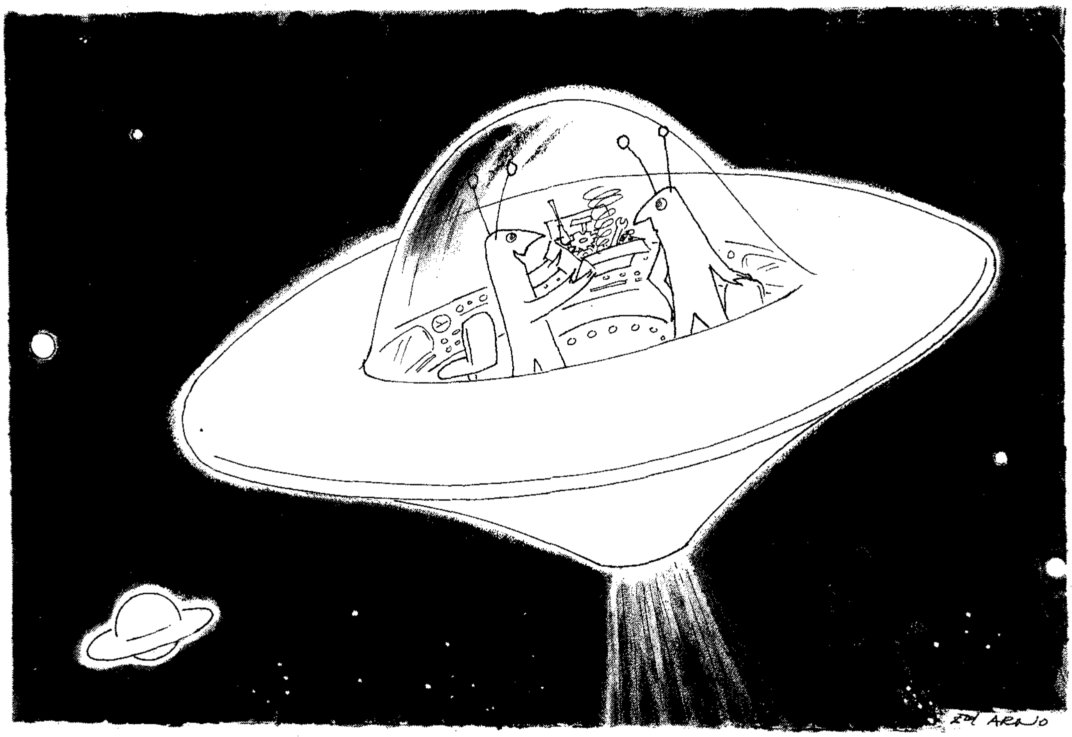
It was in 1943 that fire was first advocated as a way to rejuvenate forests in the national parks—by George McDougall, an assistant park naturalist, who was known for having said, "Nature doesn't get enough respect." Although ample evidence indicated that fire was beneficial, and even necessary, to a wilderness setting, and although ancient cultures, American Indians, and early settlers had no compunction about making use of fire for farming or hunting, the Park Service, like the Forest Service and the country at large, associated such practices with "bad habits and loose morals," in the words of Bernhard Fernow, a nineteenth-century forester. During the Second World War, posters of an Uncle-Sam-like forest ranger proclaimed that fire control was tantamount to our national defense, and a religious zealot named H. N. Wheeler equated fire control with devotion to God. Walt Disney's "Bambi," in which the fawn and his father are chased almost to their demise by a raging forest fire, inspired Smokey Bear after the war. And Smokey Bear, saying, in a deep, sonorous voice, "Remember, only you can prevent forest fires," became one of the most successful advertising campaigns of all time. By the nineteen-sixties, when more and more forest ecologists had begun to challenge the largely undisputed notion that fire was inherently evil, Smokey Bear was considered the most popular symbol in the country, according to a national advertising-research report, and, like Santa Claus, he had his own Zip Code.

Although today you can still see roadside placards of Smokey across the country, you won't see him campaigning in Yellowstone or any other national park. Yellowstone's natural-burn-management program—known officially as the Wildlife Fire Management Plan—began in 1972, and permitted lightning-caused fires to burn unhindered in certain prescribed areas. Park ecologists claimed that, in the absence of active forestry practices such as logging, fuel reduction, and reseeding, periodic wildfires were needed to resuscitate an old and dying forest. In the policy's first trial summer, four lightning starts burned a total of one acre. The next year, two such fires burned two acres. Though some people still regarded any leniency toward forest fires as scandalous, in Yellowstone and a few other national parks natural-burn regulation, in its initial run, was a critical, if not a popular, success among ecologists.

The prescribed-natural-burn plan is also known, particularly to its critics, as the let-burn policy—terminology that annoys Yellowstone's administrators, rangers, and ecologists, because they feel that it suggests they are lazy and delinquent wildlife managers. But those who support the natural-burn approach point out that fire was a part of the Yellowstone ecosystem long before man claimed it; that a forest is designed to facilitate fire; that "fire's as natural as the sun coming up in the morning"; that "putting all fires out is like saying, 'Let's stop it from raining' "; and that burned and unburned "mosaic" patterns create a more varied and thus healthier habitat. By preventing and suppressing a lot of small and large wildfires for so many years, say those whose definition of parks agrees with Bob Barbee's, Yellowstone lost—or, at least, endangered—the very thing it had been set aside to preserve: its naturalness.

A CALM spell with seasonable humidity (it even drizzled for a few minutes one afternoon) and slack winds gave Poncin's crew a couple of slow days to replace a few branch directors and division supervisors; to install showers, hand-washers, and computer systems; and to begin another long-term forecast on the fire. Although the North Fork fire and the others kept spreading, none flared up strongly for a few days. The Fan fire, in the park's northwest corner, was perhaps the most volatile. While thirteen hundred firefighters were battling that fire, members of the Church Universal Triumphant chanted incantations at the blaze to repel it from their sacred grounds, just outside the park. The Red-Shoshone fire, in the south, squirmed around Grant Village but was obstructed by Yellowstone Lake. The Clover-Mist, the park's largest fire at the time, soon ran up and over the Absaroka Range, along the park's eastern boundary, spread into a commercial timber stand in the Shoshone National Forest, and came within a few miles of the towns of Cooke City and Silver Gate, Montana, outside the park.

Every so often, I drove around in a truck with John Krebs, the fire-behavior analyst for the new incident-command team, whose job was to look over the North Fork and try to guess when and where it might make its next major run. Since the fire was amoebalike in shape (flying around the perimeter in a helicopter took an hour), it could move in any direction. Now and then, Krebs would pull the truck over, roll down his window, and take a snapshot of, say, a bull elk grazing by the road. On August 14th, we headed up the Grand Loop Road—the main highway through the park—toward the head of the North Fork fire, near Madison Junction. Krebs pointed out several acres of strewn uprooted trees—what is called a blowdown—and said, "See that there? This is just waiting for fire." Four years before, he went on, gale-force winds had torn through the park, knocking down old lodgepole-pine stands as though they were jackstraws. Most of those stands had already been dying, from an infestation of the mountain-pine beetle. Now the blowdowns were virtually explosive, he said. When it gets as dry as it had been—when the humidity drops below fifteen per cent, when downed timber has a lower moisture content (it was then about seven per cent) than kiln-dried lumber (which is about twelve per cent)—the front of the fire can be a mile or more away, yet a blowdown can suddenly, inexplicably ignite. The Yellowstone fires spread in this way, spotting from one dry or dead patch to another; as the spots grew and moved toward one another, the gathering conflagration was apt to burn the healthier stands in between. Usually, though, it appeared that the fire had methodically skipped from one old and



"The cultures were totally boring. But I did pick up some nice stuff at a flea market."

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vulnerable stand to another. All that was needed was for one tiny ember aloft in the whirling, convective winds to fall into one of these enormous potential bonfires. A firebrand could be stamped out in a second if you happened to notice it, but on dry and windy days there were just too many spots to keep up with.

"The normal tendency of fire is to be influenced by topography—to move uphill more easily than down, and finger into the drainages with the up-canyon winds," Krebs said as we drove along. "But we're finding that this thing is influenced more than anything else by the fuels—the type of timber. It's pretty gentle terrain, so when the fire hits a blowdown or a decaying old stand she's gone. When the fire puts up a column of smoke, the convection picks up little cones and branches—I've seen convection columns that actually picked up the tops of trees, fifteen or twenty feet long, and six or eight inches on the butt end, and gave them a shake—and anything that's on a tree will come flying off. Those pieces of bark, or what have you, are like sails—they have the airfoil necessary to be carried long distances. But there's just no way this fuel is going to be reduced except through the fire process."

Blowdowns aside, in most healthy lodgepole stands there are just as many trees that are dying or already dead and are congesting the forest floor. "Erect they stand," one park enthusiast once wrote of the park's ubiquitous lodgepoles, "bristling with fierce determination, while prone beneath their feet lie their uprooted brethren in tangled disorder and various degrees of decay." Ecologists say that this is the park's natural state; a mature healthy forest is one that is half dead. While in another climate—that of New York, say, or the Pacific Northwest—the dead and downed timber might decompose much more rapidly, at a pace commensurate with new growth, the climate in Yellowstone "is just too dang high, too dry for there to be natural decomposition," Krebs said. Natural decomposition is essentially extremely slow, unnoticeable fire. The consequences of decomposition and fire are the same: all the nutrients locked up in the old wood are released. In most timberlands, fire is necessary; in dry climates, especially, such as Yellowstone's, fire is needed to restore the nutrients to the soil, so that new growth can begin. Otherwise, all of the forest slowly dies.

In "Fire in America," an exhaustive survey of the fire history of the United States, Stephen Pyne writes, "The most stubborn fires burn in fuel complexes most in need of decomposition; the fires most readily extinguished are, in terms of the ecosystem's energy requirements, the least important." He goes on to say, "The whole process is self-reinforcing. The type of growth that occurs on a burn helps to determine the nature of the fuel complex, and the resulting fuel complex determines the intensity and frequency of fires and . . . future biological effects." It is not merely that the lodgepole-pine forests in Yellowstone have tolerated fire; they are a product of it. The forests have evolved through a pattern of mass fires occurring at intervals of between two and four hundred years. The saving grace for many lodgepole pines is their serotinous cones, which normally are closed tightly and are as hard as rocks, but open up when they are subjected to intense heat, such as fire, and sow seeds in the ashy, fertilized soil after a burn.

Krebs was of the opinion that fires are an inevitable consequence of natural happenings. He said that it might be nice to put the Yellowstone fire out, but that that would be impossible unless nature decided to do it—unless it rained. "When we first arrived in the park, to fight the Red-Shoshone, we could look down in the valleys and they were green," he said. "We could look under the trees and the grass was green. After two weeks, we began to notice a change of color." Blame for the fire, according to Krebs, shouldn't be focussed on the park for its natural-burn policy but, more than anything else, on a drought of several years in the northern Rockies (the past few summers in Yellowstone had been rainy, but little snow had fallen in the winters), which was now being topped off by the driest summer on record—the hottest year ever, worldwide. Krebs thought that if the conditions had been any different the fires would not now be burning, regardless of policy. But beetles had killed trees; winds had piled those trees up like kindling; and more trees were dying all the time. What's more, it hadn't rained in weeks; the winds were gusting; the humidity was low. The North Fork fire was bound to happen—not by policy, indecision, or incompetence but by the forces of nature. In fact, the park fires may have been long overdue.

We got off the Grand Loop Road and went down a lush canyon drive along the Firehole River, which forms the eastern outline of the plateau. Shaded from the sun, the area was dark and green and mossy, and, though the day was clear, smoke and fog had settled in on the river. Krebs stopped the truck and got out, and after a while he said, "When is it going to happen? Where is it going to take off on us again?" A pickup truck with a family of five crammed into the cab pulled over. The father rolled down his window, swore, and said that the problem would be solved easily enough if park managers knew enough to use bulldozers. Krebs didn't say much—only that he wasn't so sure himself. The family drove on.

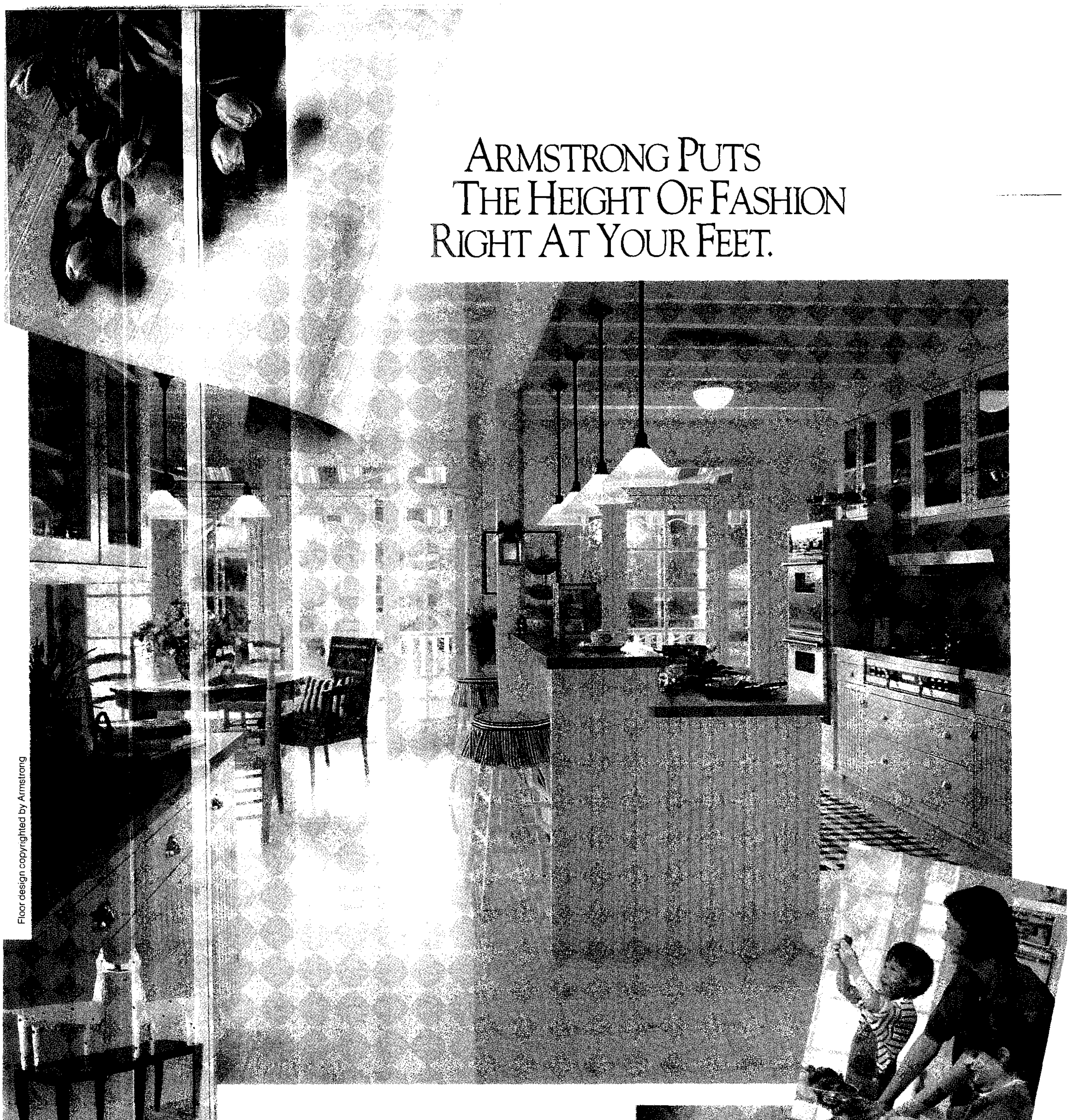
Krebs shook his head and said, "You don't want to argue with the public. But how do you explain to folks that a dozer just ain't going to do the trick? Sometimes you think you can stop a fire with a hand line, and other times you say you can use a bulldozer and make a twelve-foot-wide line. See, the reason you use a dozer is that it's faster, but the principle is still the same: you're stopping the forward spread of the fire *on the ground*. And that's about all you *can* do. But these have been crown fires. They've carried through every lodgepole-pine type, young and old, in their travels. Lately, they've burned through the meadows, too, though most often they've gone around or spotted across. Now, a meadow is essentially a firebreak—like a dozer line. But when you have a meadow that is maybe half a mile wide, and the flame spots a mile ahead, then the meadow is plain ineffective. So you know a dozer line isn't going to be any more help. But the main thing is, folks just hate to see the park change. They think it's being ruined. People have a tendency to want things as they are, but in nature nothing stays as it is. Once, all those blowdowns were standing—ten or fifteen years ago, or even five years ago—and now they're not. Now you've got all the deadfall, and nature is hollering, 'I'm getting ready to start over!' We'd like to shout, 'No! Not now! We're not ready for you!' But that ain't the way it works, folks."

That afternoon, Krebs and I drove north a few miles, to a rise above the Gibbon River, just past Madison Junction. If the fire had suddenly died that day—if it had snowed, as sometimes happens during the summer—the average tourist taking a drive north along the Grand Loop Road, from Old Faithful to the Norris Geyser Basin, say, might not have had any idea that this particular fire had burned, to date, sixty thousand acres. Other fires, such as the Red-Shoshone, were more visible. The early fire projections anticipated that if the fire went unfought it would not reach Madison Junction by the end of the summer. But in the past week, while Poncin's team waited for the fire to reach the rim of the plateau, you could see black smoke roll nearer to the bluffs each afternoon. Except for the point of origin, where the fire had at least been small—if not tame—the bluffs at Madison Junction were the one place where the firefighters stood a decent chance of impeding the North Fork fire. Here they had a natural barrier: a three-hundred-foot falloff, a river, a road, and meadows—a fuel break more nearly impervious than the foot-wide line a fire crew will cut, or even than a twelve-foot-wide dozer line. "We're necking the whole thing down," Krebs said as we drove in the shadow of the plateau and then up the Gibbon River, past Madison Junction. "It looks so docile—almost looks as if it were out, just lazying around up there. But I'd bet more than a beer that under the circumstances you couldn't put it out. What we need to do is buy time. It's coming right at us, and it's inevitable that it's going to come down off the plateau—but preferably under more moderate conditions. That would be the best thing in the world. If it ties off at those bluffs, without really spotting, then it's pretty secure: you can bring in another team; you can reduce your forces; we can go home. However, if it comes across, then we're in another ballgame."

For the rest of the afternoon, parked up on a rise, Krebs and I watched a column of smoke on the plateau a mile to the southwest of us switch back and forth with the wind. An hour passed. Krebs concentrated on the elements—heat, humidity, wind—and we hardly talked. At four-thirty, Krebs said he was no longer wondering whether the fire would cross the Firehole River but when. He said he hoped it wouldn't hit the edge of the plateau until late in the day, when the sun would be going down and the temperature would be lower and the humidity higher. Then we heard over the walkie-talkie that the fire had hit the bluffs and was throwing spots a mile ahead of the front. Sometime after five o'clock, we saw flames flashing out through the smoke.

In the hour or so before the fire reached the edge of the plateau, Krebs and the two operations chiefs in charge of the actual fighting tactics, Robert Meuchel and Jake Jacobsen, gave some thought to undertaking a helitorch operation—igniting a "burnout," to consume the fuel ahead of the fire, by means of a helicopter—along the Firehole River, down the snug lee side, opposite where Krebs and I had stopped only a few hours before. I hadn't imagined then that the canyon would be devastated, too, but fire makes no aesthetic discriminations. Though some fires would creep down the canyon, hit the river, and go no farther, diffidence hadn't been the character of the North Fork fire. Krebs, Meuchel, and Jacobsen agreed that with a low but rising humidity, the setting sun, and a steep, wooded ravine that would draft the fire nicely into the main fire, they could take advantage and fight fire with fire.

IN a windy meadow along the Firehole River, Meuchel swatted at gnats while the helitack crew rigged a



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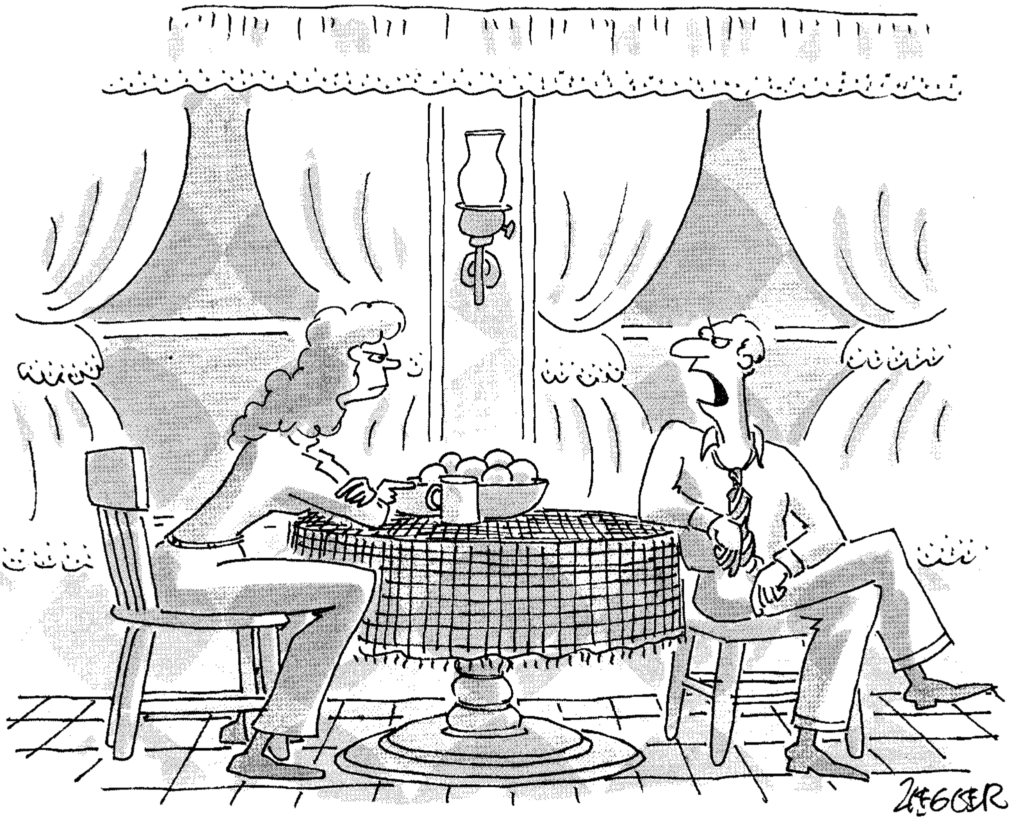

“*You’re enjoying this, aren’t you—hammering away at my credibility.*”

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light helicopter with a helitorch—a barrel that hangs from the helicopter and drips a gasoline gel, which ignites as it hits the ground. Although Meuchel had conferred with Jacobsen and had consulted Krebs on the weather and on burning conditions, the helitorch operation was his call to make. Meuchel calls his job “the art of knowing when to do what.” He isn’t the kind of fastidious operations chief who works things out with pencil and paper or with a calculator designed to predict various aspects of fire behavior, such as intensity and rate of spread. He seldom looks at a map. He doesn’t take notes. He makes decisions quickly and undramatically. He just says, as he had said to Krebs over the walkie-talkie half an hour earlier, “O.K., yeah, why don’t we light that ridge and see what happens?”

Meuchel smoked a cigarette while he waited; smoking is a habit he picks up as soon as he’s called to a fire and drops as soon as he’s called off. A man named Gary Glotfelty, who, as one of the fire’s two branch directors, served as supervisor of the fire crews, pulled up in a truck and got out. He suggested that they hold off on the helitorch, and wait until the fire backed down the slope of the canyon, where they could line the river with a few dozen fire-engine crews.

“I don’t think that would do ’er,” Meuchel said. “There’s a lot of unburned fuel back there, and you know me. I love a clean, black line.”

“Well, that’s the only kind of line to have,” Glotfelty said. “You hate to go home and read in the paper five days later that the fire took off again. But I’m afraid this thing is going to spot and kill us.”

“It’ll spot, but it’s short-range spotting—only across the road,” Meuchel said. “If we can strip it out even and get it started on the bank, backing down, we should be in good shape. We’ll be burning against topography, so we’ll have a backing fire. You could line it and two days later have a spot in there you can’t catch. This way, we’ll know.”

“Look at this wind now—right in our faces,” Glotfelty said. “We might want to wait until morning.”

Meuchel smiled and said, “I was just thinking of trying—just starting something, to see if it will burn. That sort of thing. Nothing dangerous.”

“Because of tha wind. Boy! And this is critical point, too. If yo don’t hold the river you’re talking abou it moving way out on those flats. You might be able to catch it at—”

Meuchel interrupted Glotfelty with a sharp laugh. “If it comes off the plateau and goes over the highway, we’ll just let ’er go. We’ll protect what we can—the structures—but we won’t be able to stop it. There’s just no way.” They were quiet for a minute, and then, as the helicopter began to whine and throb, Meuchel stubbed out his cigarette, put it in his pants pocket, and said, “So I guess we can go start a fire.”

Flames were snapping out from the crest of the plateau by the time I hitched a ride back to Firehole Canyon, ten miles up the river from the heliport. I joined Jacobsen, three other section chiefs, and a couple of park rangers, all of whom had heard about and had come up to see the helitorch operation. A dozen or more engine crews stood guard along the drive, which ran next to the river. In a few minutes, two helicopters emerged from the black smoke over the plateau and swooped along the river. On their first pass, Meuchel, who was flying in the lead helicopter, explained by radio to the pilot flying behind him where he wanted to ignite the fire. On their next pass, the second helicopter descended to treetop level, and a thin stream of the gel (about thirty-five gallons) trickled from the barrel onto the trees. In an instant, the riverbank was consumed by fire. With a deafening roar, flames raced from the ground up trunks and through branches, and made a final pirouette three hundred feet in the air.

Over a walkie-talkie Meuchel said to Jacobsen, “Burned a little more than I planned.”

“Yeah, you did,” Jacobsen said. “It’s cooking nicely.”

Krebs, who continued to watch from

M. BOLACK
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the rise above the Gibbon River, said over the walkie-talkie, "You can see 'er cranking now. It's snorting right along."

Firefighters chased after spot fires that began kindling on our side of the river. A giant, twin-propeller helicopter called a Vertol appeared and, from a suspended thousand-gallon bucket the size of a small room, dropped water on a cluster of torching pines. Some of the spectators rolled down their sleeves, pulled up their bandannas bandit style, grabbed shovels or Pulaskis, and went after the smaller spots in the undergrowth. The timing on the helitorch had been good, though: the wind was flagging, the temperature was falling, and already the fire was losing energy. In an hour, the fire would smolder quietly in the cool night air. I saw an ember float across the drive and land in the duff on the other side, and, remembering that all fires start small, I walked over and stamped it out.

"We'll get in here tomorrow and kick the crap out of it," Jacobsen said. He got in his truck, and since he was heading back to camp I asked him for a ride.

SMOKE pressed in low and seemed to smother the North Fork fire the next day, August 15th. Early in the afternoon, Dave Poncin and I drove to Madison Junction in a Dodge Caravan, with the headlights on. As the incident commander, Poncin was not actually engaged in the tactical business of positioning and maneuvering fire crews, calling in waterdrops, and helitorching hillsides; he went out that day, as I did, merely to see what would happen. "We've got a long afternoon," he said. "I think before the day's over it's going to get about as heavy as it ever gets. The fire is going to come over the top in an hour or so, when the winds come up and the humidity drops, and it's liable to spot down at the junction and burn up the Gibbon River flats. It'll probably clear the grass and the river, and all we can do is be there when that happens."

We drove around for about an hour: through the closed and evacuated Madison campground; above the Gibbon, to say hello to Krebs at his post; and down the Madison River, where through the smoke we could see the silhouettes of grazing elk. Driving back to Madison Junction, we saw a spot fire burning in the grass near the bridge that crossed the Gibbon River. Given the size of the North Fork fire, the spot seemed nothing to bother about, but Poncin pulled over anyway, flagged down a passing fire engine, and borrowed a couple of shovels. We slapped at the flames with the shovels, and beat the fire out in a couple of minutes. This was so satisfying that when I noticed a log in flames lying near a lodgepole stand we went for it without discussion. We had some trouble there, though, until an obliging helicopter helped out with a waterdrop.

We left the log to smolder and walked up the highway and across the bridge, into a dense tumult of smoke. From a distance—from the town of West Yellowstone, Montana, say, fifteen miles away—such billowing smoke might look something like the plume of an atomic explosion. We were not more than a mile from what would have been ground zero, and the smoke overwhelmed us. I could feel the fire as it sucked in toward the junction, but I couldn't see anything. At the bridge, an engine crew tried to fell a snag that hung dangerously over the road. Poncin led the way up a slope until we couldn't see or breathe and began tripping over fallen snags. If a snag above us had fallen just then, we couldn't have heard it over the roar or seen it through the smoke. Poncin yelled (though I was standing less than a yard away, in order not to lose sight of him), "Do you really want to do this?" and we walked back across the bridge. A few minutes later, we tried driving through the smoke, but we couldn't see the hood ornament on the van, and we turned around again.

Farther down the Madison River, we escaped the thick smoke and found some relatively fresh air. (Both of us had the headache and faint nausea symptomatic of carbon-monoxide inhalation.) A few minutes later, someone on the walkie-talkie reported a spot fire just past the Gibbon Bridge. When a crew member said his crew couldn't get to it, Poncin said, "O.K. Sounds like a job for America's finest." We got back in the van.

Beyond the confluence of the rivers, a few hundred yards from the highway and down a wooded slope, a spot fire had kindled in grass, shrubs, and juniper bushes and beneath a fir log. Each of us took a side of the spot, which covered about a quarter of an acre, and began to dig and throw dirt and slap at the burning grass with our shovels. We could do nothing about putting out the flames that consumed the log, however, and could only hope to keep the spot from spreading. After a while, I couldn't see Poncin anymore. I clambered up the slope to catch my breath. I felt lost. I told myself that the woods were thin and there was not a lot to burn, so the fire wouldn't take off, but that if it did I could jump into the river or beat it to the highway, where the van was, with the keys in the ignition. My adrenaline level was high, though, and I decided to keep working. Trimming along the edges of the spot, I was hardly subduing the flames, but I made my way almost around the perimeter. Then I saw Poncin working toward me. He looked up, took off his hard hat, wiped his brow, and stepped back. "Operations, this is the I.C.," he said on the walkie-talkie. "We're down here on that spot by the bridge, and we could sure use a hand."

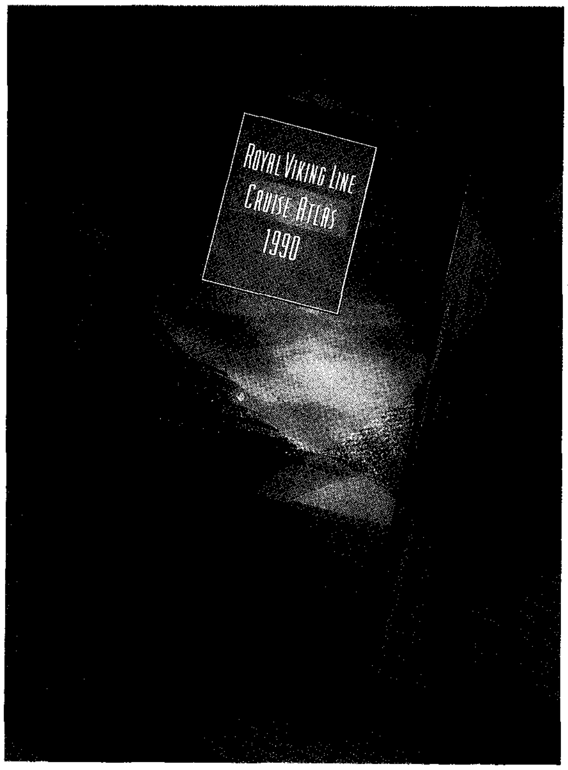
Meuchel came on and said not to bother. He said there were uncontrolled spots crowning and running miles ahead of us—a long way up the river flat already. "You might as well get out of there," he said.

Jacobsen, who had been listening in, said, "Kind of took it in the shorts. So much for our objectives."

After that, Poncin and I and, it seemed, everybody else stopped fighting fire. Barbee told me later that when he heard that the fire had crossed the river at the junction he knew there was nothing anybody could do to stop it. Poncin didn't say anything then, but he, too, later admitted that at that moment he had lost hope of beating it. It was only three o'clock, but it was clear that nothing short of rain or snow would stop the North Fork fire.

And whatever success yesterday's helitorch operation had had along the Firehole River didn't matter much now: under the gathering winds, the spot fires that hadn't been entirely quenched the day before picked up, and the fire swept over the river, across the road, and up into the woods. We had to wait awhile, standing around with an engine crew, before we ventured over the bridge and, again driving blind through smoke, made our way back down the highway to the canyon. Only half a mile or so down the road, more fallen snags made driving impossible, so we got out and walked. The canyon had a creepy, desolate feeling. A pale, liquid half-light washed over Poncin's face. Small fires smoldered here and there, and bluish smoke danced on stumps, but almost nothing was left to burn. Where trees had stood there were now only shiny charcoal sticks, and on the ground were the ashy, ghostlike afterimages of logs that had burned to nothingness. We came to what remained of a power line and followed it away from the Firehole River into the ravaged woods. The hot ash underfoot melted the rubber soles on my boots. Trees had been uprooted, and the ones that hadn't already fallen teetered and creaked. On the rises, the smoke wasn't too bad, but in the troughs it scraped at our throats and blinded us. We had to turn around once again.

As we hiked back to the van, Poncin said, "You know, I've always been enthusiastic about this job. I've always figured that it could never get too



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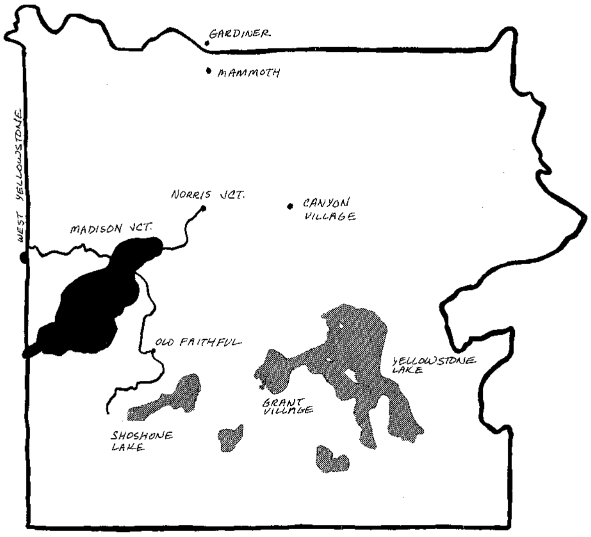
tough. But I'm beginning to face mortality now, and it does get tough. The ground gets harder to sleep on—I guess that's O.K. But days like today . . . You don't look good when you lose a lot of acres, and the fire's getting to be just plain big. It's the failure that gets to you."

AFTER the North Fork fire burned a clean swath through Madison Junction, advancing ten miles to the northwest in an afternoon, the fire maps in camp showed it looking like this:



The North Fork fire, Yellowstone National Park, August 16, 1988

Thirteen thousand acres burned on August 15th. In the six days since I arrived, thirty-four thousand acres had burned; that is, the fire had more than doubled in size. And for the next week the head of the fire ran unchecked, at about two miles a day, over the flats along the Gibbon River toward Norris Junction and beyond. Because the fire was moving so quickly and impulsively, a frontal assault was not even considered. Crews dug fuel breaks up the remote west flank, continued mop-up operations on what at the time was considered the quiet east side, near Old Faithful, and were sent ahead to prepare various evacuated structural enclaves, such as the Norris Geyser Museum and, later, Canyon Village, by thinning out the surrounding woods, carting the dead timber and slash away, and dousing the buildings with a soapy fire retardant that looked like snow. Crews would get dropped off by helicopter in the morning on the remote backcountry flanks; hike for an hour (lugging chain saws, gas cans, packs, Pulaskis, shovels, McLeods, and water bags); cut two or three miles of line during the day; hike back to a bivouac at their drop-off point; eat a lukewarm dinner; sleep; get up at 5 A.M. for a lukewarm breakfast; and do the same thing all over again. They would live like this for three or four days at a stretch and then maybe they would get to come in to the fire camp for a night, to shower and perhaps to make a phone call. The next morning, they would be back on the lines. Most crews had been on the lines, seldom working less than fourteen hours a day, with only one or two days off, since early June. Across the country, over fifteen thousand firefighters were now employed—more than three thousand of them in Yellowstone, and a thousand on the North Fork alone. Toward the end of August, the Army sent two battalions of six hundred soldiers each to the park from Fort Lewis, Washington, and in September almost three thousand military personnel were in the park. From the time the fires began until they were officially declared out, in November, nearly ten thousand people were engaged in fighting the Yellowstone fires.

I lost touch with the Redding Hot Shots after a week. Later I heard from a crewman called Marv, who fought fire six months of every year and travelled the world the rest of the time, that the Hot Shots had been sent to Smoke Jumper Hot Springs, on the east edge of the fire. They were supposed to cut and hold a line up the northeast flank there to keep the fire from barrelling at Old Faithful, but in addition to cutting line they spent much of their time trying to keep up with and contain hundreds of spot fires, many larger than an acre. The Hot Shots stayed out five days, and because an impenetrable smoke inversion held the smoke close to the ground and prevented helicopters from getting to them they were not supplied for the last three days. Luckily, they had plenty of water.

I hung around the fire camp, which had been moved to the campground at Madison Junction—after the fire skirted by—and complained about the smoke, and ate well. Some days, I drove around with Meuchel and Jacobsen or flew the fire by helicopter as they continued to direct crews and to attempt backfires, burnouts, and helitorchings. Over the next four days, the weather kept getting hotter and drier, and the winds kept blowing, and the fire kept rolling deeper into the heart of the park. John Krebs, pointing out that the woods could get only so dry, said, "They're not going to spontaneously combust, *you* know." One good thing, Poncin said, was that the days were getting shorter; and he felt certain that it would eventually rain.

In the meantime, there may have been some consolation in the claim of just about everybody, including the firefighters themselves, that 1988 would go into the record books as the worst fire season in American history. In terms of acreage burned, the summer of 1988 was not yet quite as bad as what is generally thought of as the worst year ever—1910, when five million acres burned in the northern Rockies (but not in Yellowstone), and seventy-nine firefighters were killed. But in 1988 Southern California's toughest month was still ahead; the previous September, fire had ravaged eight hundred thousand acres in Northern California and the Central Sierra Nevada and killed ten people. (Nobody was killed in Yellowstone in 1988, but one person, struck by a falling snag, was killed just outside the park.) By late August, about three and a half million acres had burned nationwide, and, though that figure included fires that burned two million acres in Alaska, the fires that burned in and around the northwest corner of Wyoming, in the world's first and best-known national park, were the ones that attracted media attention. Many of the stories only exacerbated the let-burn controversy. A story in *Time* bore the headline "WE COULD HAVE STOPPED THIS"—quoting a firefighter, who added, "They won't let us." Whether or not the assessment of one firefighter obscured the facts, the natural-burn controversy made good copy, dovetailing nicely with stories about the drought, global warming trends, the greenhouse effect, and refuse washing up on Eastern shores.

Among the fire bosses, the general attitude seemed to be that, in Bob Bar-

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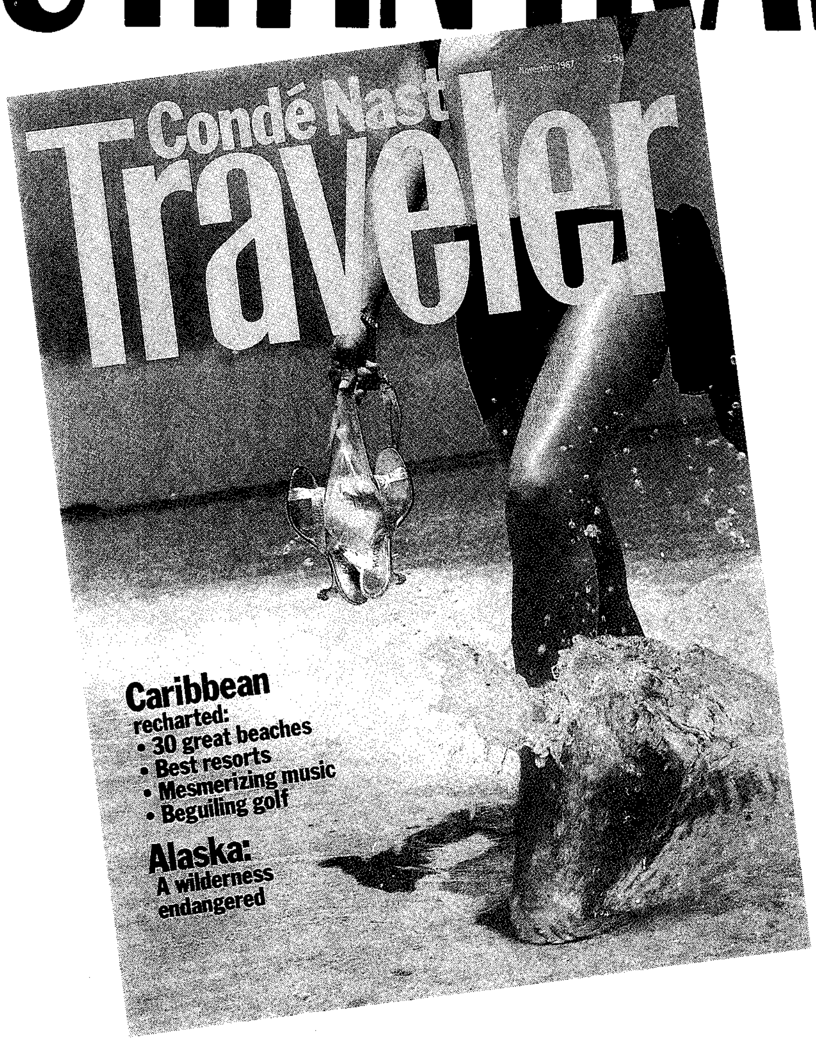

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bee's words, "no matter who did what when, Yellowstone would have burned." A fifteen-minute downpour could have accomplished what millions of dollars and thousands of men and women could not. But among the firefighters it remained a popular notion that the devastation was the park management's doing. "See, the Park Service, they don't let you put the fire out," a firefighter told me in a confidential tone at dinner one night. "If they didn't say protect the ground, the trees, and all this dead shit—as if that was the forest—we'd have gone in with heavy retardant, a lot of dozers, a lot of hand crews, and this fire would have been out in a week. They tried to nurse this critter along, but I'd say they got a tiger by the tail now." Citizens of the town of West Yellowstone echoed this sentiment, telling reporters that the crews complained when they were in town that they weren't allowed to do everything they could to put the fires out. Politicians, among them Senator Max Baucus, of Montana, assumed a knowledge of fire management, and reiterated their constituents' and the firefighters' general disgruntlement. On August 19th, Senator Baucus told local reporters, "I flew over the entire North Fork fire and frankly I'm not convinced that if enough men and equipment were utilized that fire couldn't be stopped."

Although Barbee later said he thought that media control could be more effective than fire control, the park administrators' initial optimism about the fire, and the miraculous ecological boon that would ensue, had caused a public-relations problem. Most environmental groups, such as the Audubon Society, the Wilderness Society, and the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, supported natural-burn management, but Ed Lewis, the executive director of the Coalition, remarked, "[The park] tried to make the fire a totally positive thing." Although Barbee rejected any suggestion that the park officials had been indecisive, he realized that the situation had seemed to send out a garbled signal. "Here we are, on the one hand, in a massive firefighting effort—massive—spending a hundred and twenty million dollars trying to put the damn things out, and then, on the other hand, trying to dispel the anxiety about the world's first national park being on fire," he said to me late in August. "We're not Nero here—we're not promoting holocausts. But ecologically this is not a disaster. The bottom line is that it's a plus." To someone who feared for the park, however, or whose vacation plans had been ruined, or who had been awakened early in the morning and told that he and his family would have to leave the park, Barbee's statement that "fire is a stimulant and as important to the ecosystem as sunshine and rain" was probably little consolation.

Nor had the enthusiasm of park administrators and ecologists impressed the citizens of West Yellowstone. They met in the town's convention hall before noon on Saturday, August 20th—almost a month after the North Fork fire started—to express their indignation to Barbee and the managers of the fires. Immediately adjacent to the park's western entrance, West Yellowstone draws fifteen million dollars' worth of business from park visitors in a good year. The town is often the subject of derision—some people find it amazingly ugly—but, whatever it looks like, its eight hundred or so year-round residents have a lot of civic pride. Although the fire was nine miles distant, and the southwesterly winds seemed to be pushing the blaze away from the town, it was hard for anybody who lived there not to feel menaced by a thirty-five-thousand-foot-high cloud of brown smoke blotting out the eastern sky each afternoon. But more than that, the citizens' outrage stemmed from the feeling that their worries as a community, as businesspeople, had been utterly ignored in the park managers' fever for fire. At the meeting, they demanded to know why, if man-caused fires were supposed to be put out, the North Fork fire hadn't been. And a man who was concerned about the tourism that supported three hotels and four restaurants he owned in town asked if there was any way the fire managers could preserve what he called a greenbelt of unburned trees along the highways, to create an illusion of scenery. A man sitting behind me said that instead of any more talk about trying to contain the fires he wanted to hear some more about putting them out. A woman on the other side of the room asked if it wasn't possible "to use those big water bombers and just come in and supersaturate everything," and added, "They do that in other parts of the country, you know."

Poncin, Krebs, Barbee, and John Varley, the head of the park's research department, answered the questions, telling the people of West Yellowstone that "the absolute objective from Day One was to get the fire controlled, contained, suppressed, or whatever"; that the firefighters had had "precious few breaks"; that until the firefighters did get a break they themselves couldn't talk realistically about extinguishing the fire; that they would take the idea of a greenbelt into consideration; that bulldozers weren't as effective as everybody would like to think; that the animals were not terribly bothered by the fires, but that a lot of elk and buffalo could die over the winter, more because of the drought than because of the fires; that the questions were excellent ones; and, finally, that "this is not going to last forever."

At one o'clock that afternoon, as the town meeting adjourned, the winds were blowing at thirty miles an hour, with gusts up to seventy. I watched Bob Barbee step out into a blast of hot, dry air, look at his wife, and let out a sigh that said, "Oh, God!" A hundred and sixty-five thousand acres in Yellowstone burned that day—more than had burned in the entire history of the park. It was the single worst day in the history of firefighting, and it became known in the newspapers as Black Saturday.

ABOUT a week after Black Saturday, when I heard that Dave Poncin's team was being replaced, after twenty-one days on the job, I decided to leave, too. By then, the North Fork fire had grown so huge and ungainly that it had a second name: the southern half was still the North Fork fire, but the northern half was now referred to as the Wolf Lake fire and was being managed as a separate fire by a second incident-command team. The night before I left, Bob Meuchel told me that this had been the most frustrating fire he had ever fought, and that he had never felt completely defeated before, as he did now; he spoke vaguely about getting out of firefighting. A lot of firefighters surely understood Meuchel's despair, whether they said anything or not. A day like Black Saturday obliterated weeks of work, and made it easier for the public and the politicians to hold the park admin-

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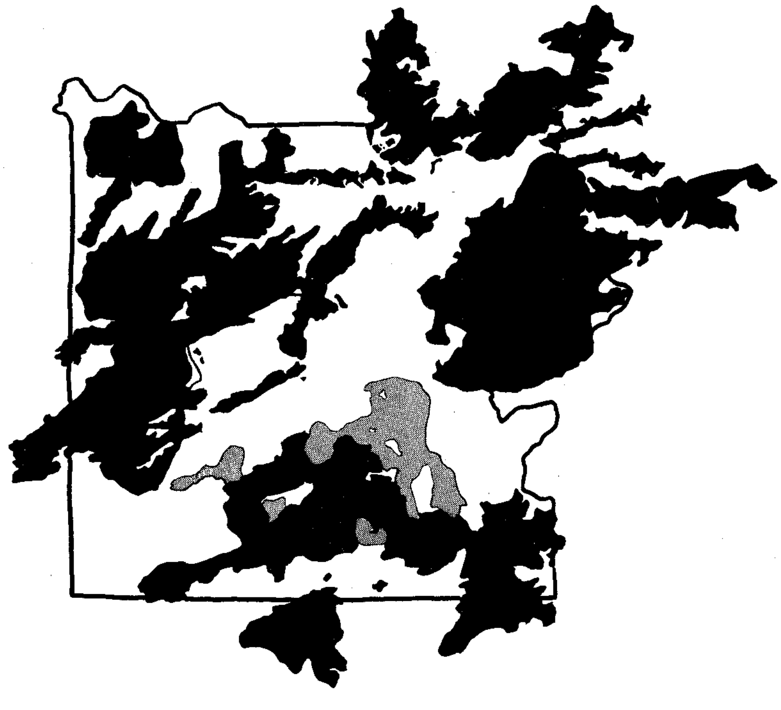
istrators and their policies in contempt for having allowed the fires to burn in the first place. In the end, almost a million acres had burned in Yellowstone Park itself, and about a million and a quarter acres in the greater Yellowstone area.

A MONTH after leaving Yellowstone, I received the fax shown below from the park's public-affairs office.

Long before the fires were out, park ecologists and administrators had begun to worry that the natural-burn policy would be abandoned. With Wyoming's Senators Malcolm Wallop and Alan Simpson calling for the resignation of the director of the Park Service (Wallop also called for Barbee's), the ecologists realized that a revision of some sort was inevitable. "There are going to be people who will want to chuck the whole thing," Roy Renkin, a field researcher in the park, had told me before I left. "Then there will be middle-of-the-road people, who want to keep the policy except in drought years. And that's probably how it will be revised. But that's a death knell to the natural-fire plan, because we get fires of any consequence only with the infrequent occurrence of dry conditions. So if they change it they're still keeping these biologically significant events from happening."

On September 13th, after Secretary of the Interior Hodel, Secretary of Agriculture Richard Lyng, and Deputy Secretary of Defense William Taft briefed him on the damage, President Reagan intimated in a meeting with reporters that the natural-burn plan would be amended. The next day, Hodel announced that the National Park Service would change its practices and, he implied, revert to a more grudging, impatient relationship with nature. He promised that reforestation and revegetation of some burned-out areas, as well as feeding wildlife, would take place after the fires were out. Although Hodel said that natural regulation would not be overturned completely, Barbee and the park's ecologists had to cringe. After official review teams surveyed the fires and took stock of the damage, a Greater Yellowstone Postfire Assessment, prepared and issued this spring by the Park Service and the Forest Service, hailed the virtues of fire, saying, for instance, of the wildlife, that "individual losses can be considered to be relatively minor when compared to the magnitude of long-term fire-related benefits." But, like most Park Service documents, the announcement was ambiguous; "what Yellowstone is all about" was still uncertain. And, as Renkin had predicted, even fires that meet the prescribed-natural-burn criteria will be very closely monitored in dry years, and probably put out. In addition, the parks were actively encouraged to set occasional small prescribed fires to clean up

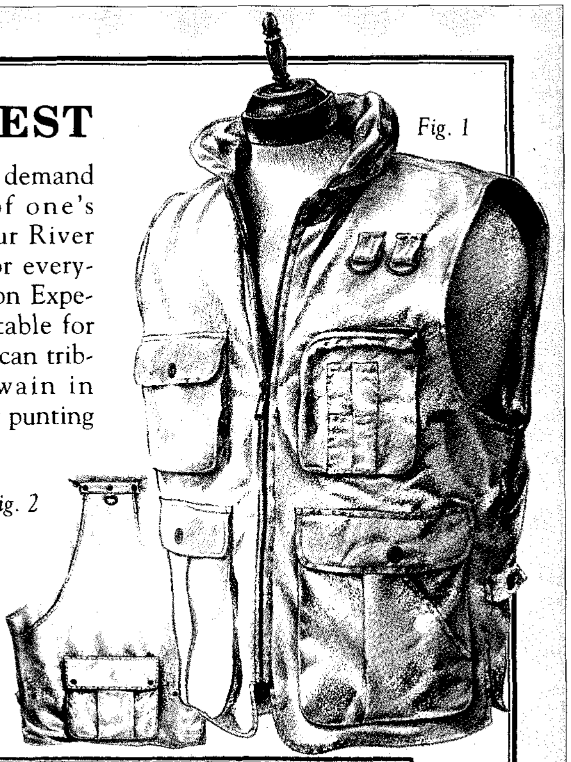


Yellowstone fires, September 26, 1988

the accumulated fuel loads and stave off future holocausts. The government also decided that through the 1989 fire season, across the country, all fires in national parks would be fought, and, accordingly, it tripled the firefighting budget. But then this summer was typical in Yellowstone—twenty-three fires started, the largest of which burned less than five acres.

In Yellowstone, the controversy persists. The concern is not only whether nature should have its way but also whether the park, a public trust, should be a stage where nature performs. But if not Yellowstone, where? Park ecologists continue to believe that natural regulation works, but most people, Barbee says, are made uneasy by the fact that nature regulates more strenuously than human beings might. It seems that we want nature but don't want it to be entirely natural—we want wilderness to behave. More than most natural occurrences, I think—more than, say, an earthquake or a volcanic eruption—forest fires touch off a basic frustration with nature. Man believes that he has taken possession of fire and therefore controls it, but then a wildfire that lasts for months and burns almost a million acres snatches that authority away. More than twenty-five million dollars was spent on the attempt to put the North Fork fire out—a hundred and twenty million dollars on all the Yellowstone fires—but ultimately, according to the Postfire Assessment, the largest firefighting effort in the history of the United States "probably did not significantly reduce the acreage burned."

Yellowstone will survive the fires of 1988. By the fall, spears of grass were poking through the blackened soil, and this spring a riot of wildflowers erupted, as usual. In a typical burned acre, where perhaps three hundred and fifty old lodgepoles once stood, perhaps a hundred thousand pine seeds were scattered; most of those seeds will be food for squirrels and deer mice, and most of those that aren't eaten won't take root, but within five years some six thousand saplings will rise from the forest floor. And, so long as the trees that survive are not cut down, in two or three or four hundred years—someday, anyway—when conditions have conspired once more, when it is dry and hot and windy, probably toward the end of a prolonged drought, those trees will burn, too. —THOMAS HACKETT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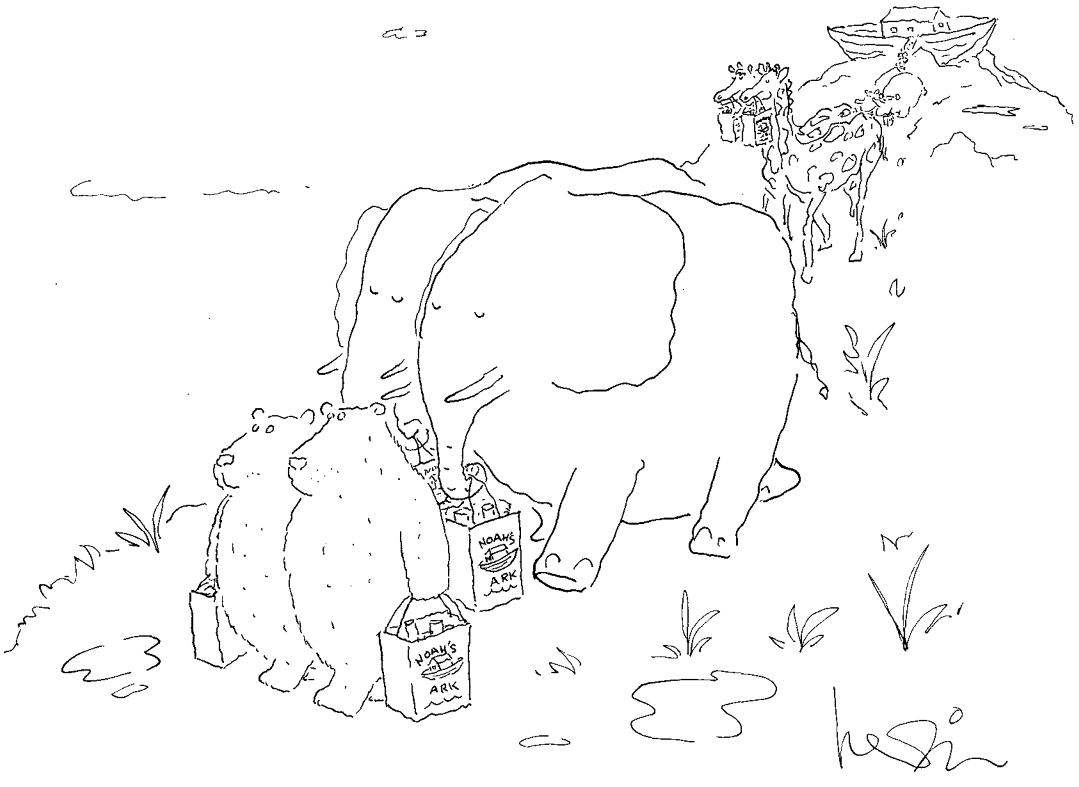
BREAKING FAITH—II

ALTHOUGH in becoming the fourth Secretary-General of the United Nations, in January, 1972, Kurt Waldheim assumed control of an enfeebled organization, an assessment of the United Nations' deterioration under his leadership is no mere study of degrees of incapacity. Waldheim's appeasement of member governments—which was eager and obsessive, in contrast to the wan docility of his immediate predecessor, U Thant—occurred within a world whose mounting disorder arose, increasingly, from popular, parochial, or anarchistic movements before whose insistence or fanaticism governments themselves were in many cases helpless. The long preoccupation of Secretariat officials with governmental contacts, and their awe of established position, had not only left them without prescience and influence in this larger sphere but encouraged their inaccessibility to the public concern, and an unreality toward those events, ideas, and transfigurations that did not come before the United Nations. Legalistic deliberations at the U.N. on crises with which the world was urgently seized were greeted by the organization as initiatives; while, to the public, they merely emphasized the U.N.'s self-indulgence and its removal from the pace and nature of new realities. Waldheim's tenure was to be dense with irreproachable statements on global peril, and punctuated by referrals of critical questions to governmental bodies whose inaction was assured—these exercises being treasured up by commentators on United Nations affairs as evidence of the Secretary-General's "independence and activism." In 1972, the first year of his incumbency, Waldheim called on the General Assembly to discuss the question of terrorism. (In December, 1985, having considered the matter for thirteen years, the Assembly agreed—as the New York *Times* reported—to the adoption of "a landmark resolution . . . that condemns all acts of terrorism as 'criminal.' ") In 1973, the *Times* noted that a U.N. body "has been trying to find a definition for the word 'aggression' for 23 years. . . . As a result of this stagnation the major powers deal with each other directly in all important aspects of their relationships." The *Times* article concluded, however, by endorsing a favored U.N. view: "In the words of Charles Yost . . . a former representative here, 'just existing is perhaps the most important quality of the United Nations.' "

Waldheim's own attitude toward his responsibilities was quoted by the *Times*, in connection with the issue of terrorism, on December 20, 1972: "Once the item was inscribed and the Assembly agreed to consider the matter, I had done my job. The rest was up to the 132 member nations." Meanwhile, "the real world"—as it was often called within the U.N.—pursued its ways and its wars. On that same day, a *Times* editorial on the Vietnam War—a conflict virtually undiscussed by the United Nations—cited the proposal of a United States Air Force general that North Vietnam be bombed "back to the Stone Age."

It is to Brian Urquhart—as Waldheim's Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, and a leading United Nations spokesman for the Waldheim years—that we must continually turn for the organization's own conception of its performance during that decade of the nineteen-seventies. Although in his autobiography, published in 1987, Urquhart criticizes Waldheim's tendency to be "too accessible to the media," Urquhart's own role in that respect appears more prominent. (Bernard Nossiter, who was chief U.N. correspondent of the *Times* in the latter years of the Waldheim era, has admiringly confirmed, in a review of Urquhart's memoirs, that "seasoned reporters and diplomats . . . would march past the secretary-general's office" in order to obtain Urquhart's views.) Urquhart, in his many public pronouncements, evidently shared the official estimate of Waldheim as a vigorous leader chafing at governmental restraints. Commenting in 1981, in *Foreign Affairs*, on the apparent ineffectuality of the Security Council, he felt that "Secretary-General Waldheim has made persistent efforts to provide



leadership and initiative in successive crises." Such a judgment of Waldheim, as a thwarted activist, was by then unlikely to find an echo in public opinion, formed in the manifest realities of Waldheim's conduct and character, and of United Nations inadequacy, during ten years of drastic world events.

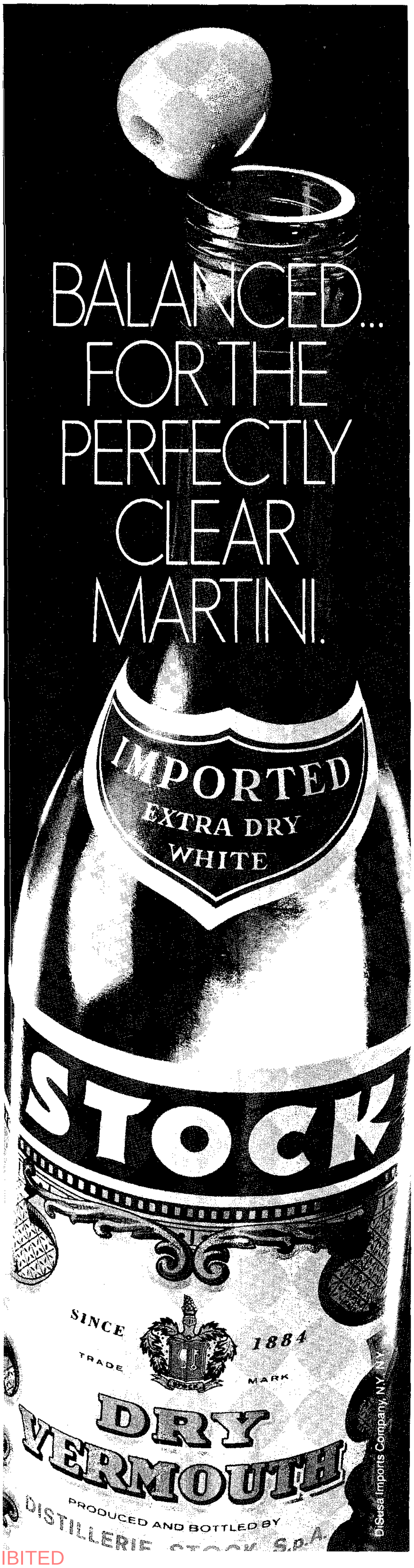
In the field of human rights, the apostasy of U.N. bodies appointed to deplore and prevent governmental persecutions had, in closing, and perverting, a legitimate outlet for the grievance of undefended victims, already contributed to violence around the world.

In 1968, as persecutions in Iran under the Pahlavis became a preoccupation in the West, an International Conference on Human Rights opened in Teheran, sponsored and inaugurated by the Shah. U Thant, in an opening address, found it "very fitting" that the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights should be thus commemorated in Iran. In 1970, the Shah's sister, Princess Ashraf, was elected by acclamation to the chair of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. The Shah's elimination of moderate political elements in Iran would itself contribute to the later ascendancy of extremism in that country. United Nations complaisance toward the Shah was to be a principal factor—acknowledged, in January, 1980, by Waldheim himself to ABC News as he returned from a futile journey to Teheran—in the Secretary-General's inability to negotiate with the Khomeini regime for the release of United States hostages.

As Waldheim began his decade at the U.N., he had asserted to the General Assembly that the "unwritten moral responsibility which every Secretary-General bears does not allow him to turn a blind eye when innocent civilian lives are placed in jeopardy on a large scale." By 1974, however, Amnesty International had presented innumerable cases, in diverse lands, of official torture and unlawful imprisonment to U.N. humanitarian organs with little response. During a brief and excruciating session early in 1974, the U.N. Commission on Human Rights agreed sub rosa to play down torture in Chile in exchange for silence on Soviet dissidents. (Under pressure from independent humanitarian groups and from world opinion, the Commission would subsequently investigate and censure Chilean violations. On December 4, 1972, at the United Nations General Assembly, President Salvador Allende of Chile had appealed in vain against actions—by United States governmental, industrial, and banking interests, and by the World Bank itself—intended to bring his government down.) In 1974, the transfer of the Commission from New York to Geneva was widely attributed to a desire to reduce public scrutiny. Through the Commission's procedures, the confidential appeals of dissidents on occasion found their way back to the offending governments—the United Nations thus delivering victims into the hands of their oppressors. (In May, 1979, *Newsweek* stated—in an article regarding a concentration in Geneva of senior U.N. officials identified as K.G.B. agents—that "at the U.N.'s human-rights division, the names of Soviet dissidents who write to protest about repression are sent to appropriate authorities in Moscow by 'senior human-rights officer' Yuri Reshetov.") Commenting, in May, 1977, on the Commission's disregard of mass atrocities committed under Idi Amin in Uganda, the *Times* of London stated in an editorial:

> This was a repetition of United Nations indifference to the massacres, not less horrible or numerous, though less publicised, which occurred in Burundi. (Indeed, United Nations agencies in Burundi were accused of cooperating with President Micombero.) . . .
>
> In short, the Human Rights Commission has little or nothing to do with rights, justice or human conscience. It is, or has become, a political and propaganda body. It makes a mockery of human rights, as solemnly written into international conventions.

Persecutions in Greece, India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, in Central and South America, and in territories under Soviet control were similarly ignored or evaded by U.N. bodies during the nineteen-seventies. In 1974, the Secretary-General's official spokesman espoused a view then current in U.N. circles, that "Western" concepts of rights should not necessarily be urged on other cultures—although it is presumably of such standards that the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is composed. A published assertion by the U.N. Secretariat itself that the Universal Declaration "does not have the force of law" was publicly deplored, in 1977, by a retired director of the U.N. Division of Hu-



man Rights. Inconsistency even of stating, let alone applying, its decreed principles of human rights had infected the organization from its earliest years. Speaking, in 1957, of the "many cases where the United Nations have failed," Winston Churchill pointed out, "Justice cannot be a hit-or-miss system. We cannot be content with an arrangement where our new system of international laws applies only to those who are willing to keep them."

Brian Urquhart, who in 1982 felt that, in regard to human rights, "we have not done very well on that in my view so far. I have no doubt that we shall do better in the future," praised the organization in 1986 for "the putting of human rights onto an international level that governments can't ignore anymore, which is a fantastic achievement in my view." To a student of the human-rights record of the United Nations this praise is astonishing.

Years of resistance by governments to the creation of a post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had further weakened the organization's scant credit in this field, where the propitiating of evil by United Nations leaders themselves presents one of the most melancholy spectacles of the United Nations story. Theo van Boven, of the Netherlands, who assumed, in 1977, the existing position of director, approached his duties with objectivity and conscience. The termination of van Boven's U.N. service, early in 1982, was one of the first consequences of the election of the new Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, of Peru. On February 11th of that year, the New York *Times* reported, from Geneva, van Boven's statement that "he was leaving the post because of 'major policy differences with the leadership of the organization in New York,' " and went on to say:

> He declined to comment when questioned by reporters about reports that his five-year appointment, which expires at the end of April, was not being renewed by Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar because of opposition from Latin American governments.
>
> In a speech at the beginning of the current session [of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights], Mr. van Boven had mentioned reports of political murders in Chile, El Salvador and Guatemala as he called on the commission to take "appropriate and meaningful action" against the "taking of human lives by organized power."
>
> In his remarks to the commission today, Mr. van Boven said he had "always felt that our primary duty is toward the peoples in whose name the United Nations Charter was written. I have also maintained," he continued, "that whenever necessary we must speak out on matters of principle, regardless of whom we please or displease within or outside the organization."

Acting upon such convictions, van Boven could not remain in the United Nations' service.

On January 30th of this year, as the U.N. Commission on Human Rights began its annual six-week session at Geneva, the *Times* of London observed in an editorial, "The Commission's lacklustre performance over the years in bringing governments, the principal offenders, to book has done much to damage the U.N.'s standing with the public." In March, the Commission concluded its session with a perfunctory measure designed to avoid the issue of rights violations in Cuba. Regarding this event, the New York *Times* reported, on March 10th, that "when the vote was announced, the Cuban delegates cheered, threw papers in the air and leaped over desks to embrace their third world supporters." In August of this year, a United Nations human-rights assembly directly criticized, for the first time in the organization's history, abuses by one of the five permanent members of the Security Council—a subsidiary body of the Human Rights Commission voting by secret ballot to place the issue of rights violations in China before a meeting of the full Commission in 1990, as a matter of concern.

In other international humanitarian efforts, United Nations relief undertakings—greatly expanded in the nineteen-seventies, as the victims of prolonged conflicts and natural disasters multiplied—were gratuitously obstructed by the U.N. pattern of subservience to governmental pressures, of administrative havoc, and of feuds nurtured within U.N. agencies themselves. While the public was encouraged to regard the existence of a United Nations relief mission as a concerted endeavor by the organization, devoted workers in the field were repeatedly frustrated in essential tasks by the confusion and politicization of a top-heavy headquarters bureaucracy. Nothing in the United Nations' attitudes and structure had prepared the system to respond with coördinated intelligence to an unprecedented volume

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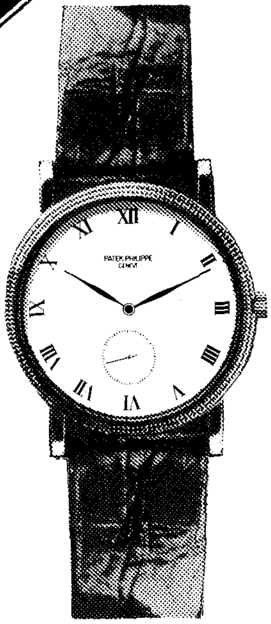
of calamities—which were associated, in Asia, with the dispersal of entire peoples and societies. Nor were correctives rationally applied: UNDRO, a U.N. agency for disaster-relief coördination created in 1971 to remedy the disorder of relief operations, was discovered only in 1980, by a U.N. expert group known as the Joint Inspection Unit, merely to have provided sinecures for appointees who rarely even visited a disaster site.

Of the U.N.'s response—in its relief operation in Bangladesh—to one of the first such large challenges, Brian Urquhart has written with unqualified enthusiasm. In 1978, in his foreword to "The United Nations in Bangladesh"—a book by Thomas W. Oliver, who had worked with the U.N. relief enterprise—Urquhart stated, "The operation was a happy combination of multilateral and bilateral effort concerted by the United Nations. It was also an example of the whole U.N. system working as a team and speaking with one voice." This view, by no means borne out in the pages of Oliver's study itself, is in contrast to the appraisal of the United Nations' performance in that prolonged emergency compiled in a confidential report by Toni Hagen. Hagen served, from late 1971 into the spring of 1972, as chief of the U.N. relief mission during the period of political convulsion and natural catastrophe that attended the birth of the nation of Bangladesh. His report—transmitted, as it were, from the battlefield—reflects the severance, familiar to many who have served on U.N. missions, of field workers from an unresponsive and unrealistic head office. Hagen repeatedly appeals against "a total lack of organization at headquarters and the deaf ear of New York *vis-à-vis* the people in the field," contrasts the arrangements of private relief agencies favorably with those of the United Nations, and deplores the headquarters' performance as "one single chain of disregard and nonacceptance of advice from the field." Thomas Oliver, who describes Hagen as "a Swiss geologist of some distinction" (Hagen had in fact served the United Nations for many years as one of its ablest field experts), criticizes his "unorthodox, outspoken" manner but acknowledges that Hagen, "vigorous and experienced in relief work," was "well liked by his staff, most of whom believed, and continue to believe, that



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he was the right man for the job at that stage in the operation." As a result of his experience in Bangladesh, Hagen withdrew from United Nations service. His forthright criticism would in any case have made his continued presence intolerable to the Secretariat leadership.

Extraneous pressures on the international relief enterprise, and their adverse consequences, have been drawn to public attention in independent accounts such as William Shawcross's "The Quality of Mercy" (1984), Dan Jacobs' "The Brutality of Nations" (1987), and the article "Famine," by Raymond Bonner, published in *The New Yorker* on March 13th of this year. An earlier study critical of the United Nations' performance in large-scale relief operations—"The Politics of Starvation," by Jack Shepherd—was issued by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 1975.

In addition to relief work, many worthy ventures would be launched, in the nineteen-seventies, by the proliferating agencies of the United Nations. But their effectiveness would in many cases be similarly inhibited by the stranglehold of the politicized central authority and its administrative disarray—essential undertakings often depending for their usefulness on the extent to which able persons in the field could outmaneuver or disregard their head office.

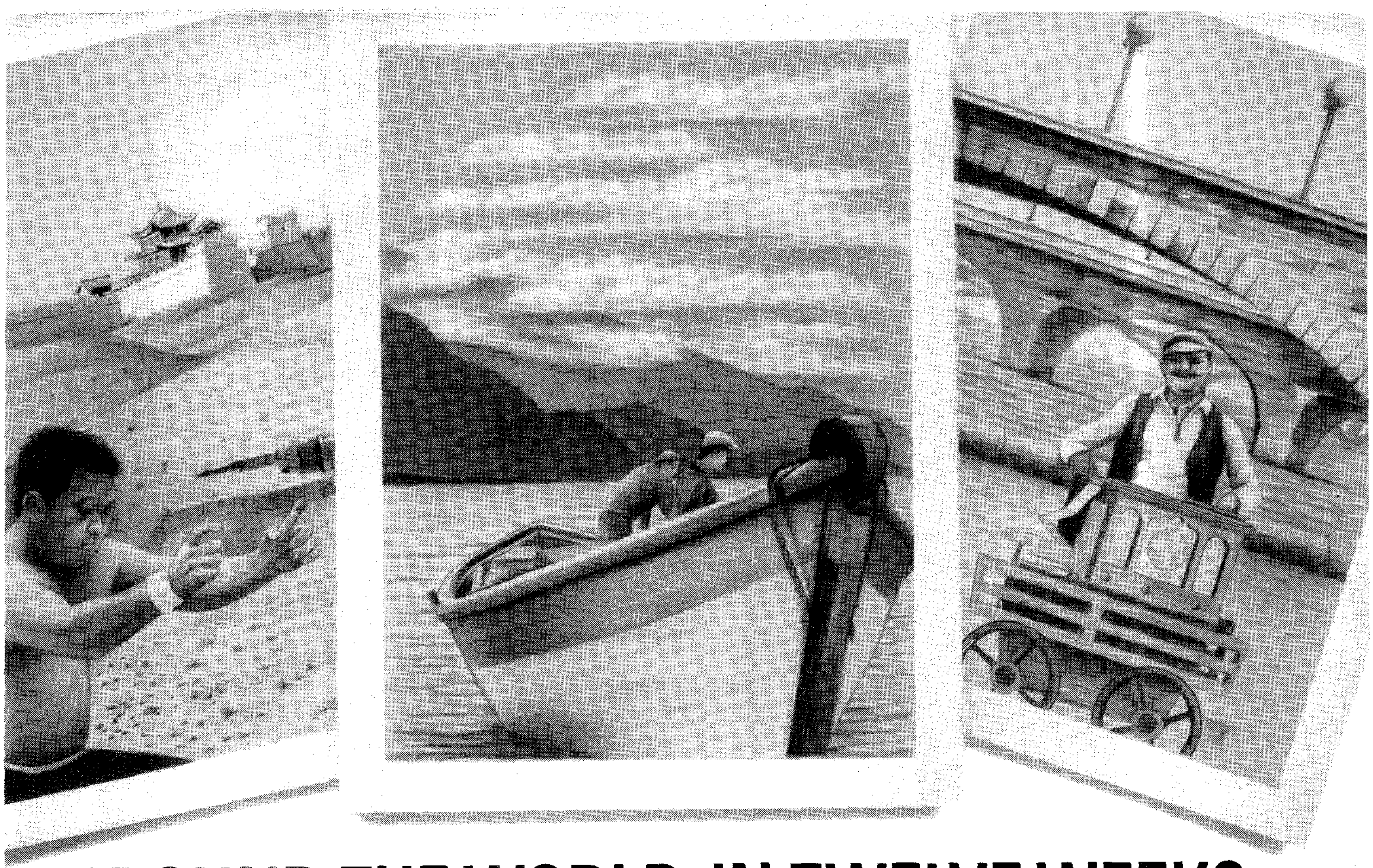
IN Kurt Waldheim's first months at the United Nations, it was evident that he would offer no leadership whatever toward resolving the Secretariat's subjection to governmental power. In July, 1972, his appeal for protection of the dikes in North Vietnam was contemptuously dismissed by President Nixon; and Waldheim did not further provoke the great powers. (Following the October War, of 1973, between Egypt and Israel, Waldheim expressed gratitude that the United Nations had been called in to complement the joint conciliatory effort undertaken by Henry Kissinger, of the United States, and Soviet leaders.)

Early in Waldheim's tenure, there were indications that his extreme receptivity to national pressures possibly originated—as in the case of the first Secretary-General, Trygve Lie—in compulsions beyond the acknowledged sphere of U.N. weakness.

The United Nations had never concerned itself with violations of human rights occurring under Soviet jurisdiction; and would not do so, even tangentially, for years. Throughout Waldheim's U.N. decade, detailed disclosures regarding the vast prison network of the Soviet Union continued to be made, within and outside Russia, by intrepid survivors. These revelations, which transfixed the world's attention, were ignored only in the councils and human-rights bodies of the United Nations, and at the Secretariat itself. Such primary failures were merged in a more general abdication by U.N. organs—an abdication obscured, in its turn, by lack of public expectations. In 1974, however, Secretariat leaders became discernibly more active in an effort to gratify totalitarian power. In February of that year, Vittorio Winspeare Guicciardi, the director-general of the United Nations office in Geneva, acting at the instigation of the Soviet government, caused a work of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn to be removed from commercial shops on the U.N.'s Geneva premises, in the Palais des Nations. Solzhenitsyn's "The Gulag Archipelago" had recently been published, in Russian, in Paris, and had made its appearance in the bookshops of the West—an event that would precipitate, in that same month of February, the author's arrest by the Soviet police and his deportation into exile.

Under the United Nations Charter, the organization's international personnel are sworn not to "seek or receive instructions from any government"; under the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, they are bound to uphold the free circulation of ideas and information "through any media and regardless of frontiers." Censorship of Solzhenitsyn by the United Nations drew protests in the European press, and from two hundred and fifty of the several thousand U.N. employees in Geneva. Persisting into July, the affair aroused questions during a press conference at Geneva conducted jointly by Waldheim and Winspeare Guicciardi. To these inquiries, Waldheim responded by asserting his dedication to "the long standing principle of freedom of information," without accounting for the removal, by stealth, from commercial shops, of a work being read around the world. His subordinate spoke of his "obligation," and that of the shops themselves, to avoid giving displeasure to "certain delegates" by the display of a publication "*à caractère outrageant pour un État Membre.*" Following this remarkable press conference, the U.N.'s action was prominently protested by PEN and in the *Times Book Review;* and the book was, at least for a time, restored to the Geneva shelves.

Waldheim's acquiescence in the Soviet demand for removal of Solzhenitsyn's work, and his adherence for months to a highly exposed act of political censorship, invite the suspicion that he acted out of fear. His conduct here belongs to the same aberrant category as his order, as Foreign Minister of Austria in 1968, for the rejection of numbers of Czech refugees attempting to enter Austria after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. (The order was disobeyed by the Austrian Ambassador at Prague, Rudolf Kirchschläger, against whom no disciplinary action was taken.) It is of a piece with his refusal, in April, 1975, to issue even so much as an appeal to Communist leaders in Vietnam on behalf of refugees; and with his notable condemnation—as "a serious violation of the national sovereignty of a United Nations member state"—of the 1976 rescue by Israeli commandos of Israeli hostages from Entebbe airport, in Uganda. These and numerous other actions and pronouncements lend their peculiar evidence to the larger trends suggested by Waldheim's apparent endorsement, at a conference on Indo-Chinese refugees in July, 1979, of Vietnam's intention to stem what Waldheim called "illegal" departures from Vietnamese territory; by his reluctance to convene a conference of settlement following Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia; or by his prompt and manifest espousal, in the mid-nineteen-seventies, of the shift throughout U.N. bodies toward condemnation of Israel on the part of the Arab nations. Of Waldheim's tepid response to conciliatory moves between Egypt and Israel, the New York *Times* reported, in February, 1978, that "he showed hesitancy about supporting the Egyptian-Israeli peace initiative, apparently because of disapproval by the Soviet Union, Syria, and more extremist Arabs." Possibili-



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ties of long-term reconciliation were thus sacrificed, by the U.N. Secretary-General, to the immediate requirements of hostile factions.

In June, 1986, in its first reference to the revelations of Waldheim's past published months earlier in the West, the Soviet press vehemently defended Waldheim as having played "an active role" in the passage of U.N. resolutions dealing with "Israel's aggression against Arab countries." Soviet fidelity to Waldheim, who served with the German Army on the Russian front in 1941 and near sites of Nazi atrocities in southeastern Europe in later years, is no more readily comprehensible than Soviet support of his original candidacy for the Secretary-Generalship—unless we may read explicit meaning into Joseph Kraft's 1971 observation that "Waldheim was the preferred Russian candidate precisely because of his pliancy."

In 1977, following his reëlection, with Soviet and United States support, to a second term as Secretary-General, Waldheim, in Moscow, presented the Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev, with a United Nations peace medal "in recognition of his considerable and fruitful activities in favor of universal peace and people's security." In return, according to the *Times* of London, which carried a photograph of the ceremony, "Mr. Brezhnev gave Dr. Waldheim a collection of medals from different Soviet republics"—Brezhnev thus contributing to a remarkable set of decorations that included Waldheim's medals from the Russian front itself, as well as from his wartime exploits in the Balkans. The accompanying talks were described by Tass as "extremely cordial." This event took place as political, intellectual, and ethnic persecutions by Soviet authorities were the focus of worldwide protest and of individual challenge within Russia itself. Whatever the intentions of those who expunged, in 1952, from the U.N. staff regulations, the General Assembly prohibition against employment at the United Nations of persons discreditably associated with Nazism and Fascism, they can hardly have included the possibility that such a figure would within twenty years become Secretary-General of the organization, decorated and commended by the leader of the Soviet Union.

Since 1977, Soviet policies have greatly changed, and it seems unlikely that the nation's younger leaders will continue to adhere to Waldheim's cause. They may discover an ultimate advantage in disclosing, to some degree, the basis of Waldheim's relations with their predecessors.

At the United Nations, Waldheim's former colleagues have asserted that his favors were evenly distributed, showing no bias toward the Soviet Union. Aside from Waldheim's manifest accommodation of Soviet requirements, we need only recall his disparagement, in 1975, of Western condemnation of his refusal to appeal on behalf of Vietnamese refugees—"The criticism comes from the West exclusively. . . . The rest of the world seems satisfied"—to feel the unreality of these judgments: an analogous dismissal, on Waldheim's part, of the views of the Soviet bloc would have been inconceivable. The favors prominently, and outrageously, extended by Waldheim to Soviet interests during his U.N. years raise the question of what further services he may have covertly performed. In the spring of 1986, the Western press carried reports from Yugoslav sources that documents concerning Waldheim had been relayed by a Yugoslav intelligence agent to his Soviet counterpart, in the immediate postwar period. The double agent Arkady Shevchenko, who before his defection to Washington was a member of Waldheim's U.N. Cabinet, agreed that Waldheim's Balkan history was probably in Soviet hands; but dismissed the likelihood that the material was used to blackmail the Secretary-General, since Shevchenko himself was never employed by Moscow to that end, and "I would have been the logical person to do it." Shevchenko's word is presumably no more reliable than Waldheim's. And Moscow, surveying the pair of them, may have felt that—in the words of George Eliot—"to act with doubleness towards a man whose own conduct was double, was so near an approach to virtue that it de-served to be called by no meaner name than diplomacy."

AN opportunity not seized is an elusive theme for speculation, and one the public finds difficult to address. During Kurt Waldheim's decade at the United Nations, a rising public perception of the unfitness of the organization, and of its Secretary-General, was belligerently repudiated by U.N. leaders who, praising Waldheim's conduct of his office, defended as a positive factor his appeasement of national pressures, evidently without pondering the possible root, or effect, of such servitude. In September, 1981, as the Waldheim era at the U.N. drew to its close in a world beset by new conflict, Brian Urquhart, as the Secretary-General's senior deputy and chief spokesman, applauded what he considered Waldheim's achievement: "In terms of usefulness, not glamor, he's actually been the best Secretary-General. He's done what none of the others did, kept on working terms with almost everyone, which is essential. He also manages to get people together in a reasonably constructive spirit and helps them find areas of agreement. People are always underrating him."

For Urquhart, Waldheim was, in a favorite characterization, "an honest broker." Yet this metaphor—given currency by Bismarck—seems out of place: honesty was at no time conspicuous in Waldheim, and his relations with the world's powers were never those of a disinterested mediator.

Unchallenged by the media, flattered in their immediate circle, the senior officials of the Secretariat had become accustomed to telling rather than listening, and to treating public concern not as a power to be mobilized but as an impertinence, and as still another phenomenon to be countered. The silencing of inquiry—even when it touched the very matters censured in the U.N.'s internal reports, or raised issues of fundamental principle—with peremptory rebuke or arcane statutory excuse played its extended role in alienating the public, and in blunting the organization's long-reduced appetite for self-comprehension. "I think that there is now a great fashion for slamming the U.N. whether it is merited or not," Brian Urquhart told a television audience in 1982. Valid objections—lumped together, as in this instance,

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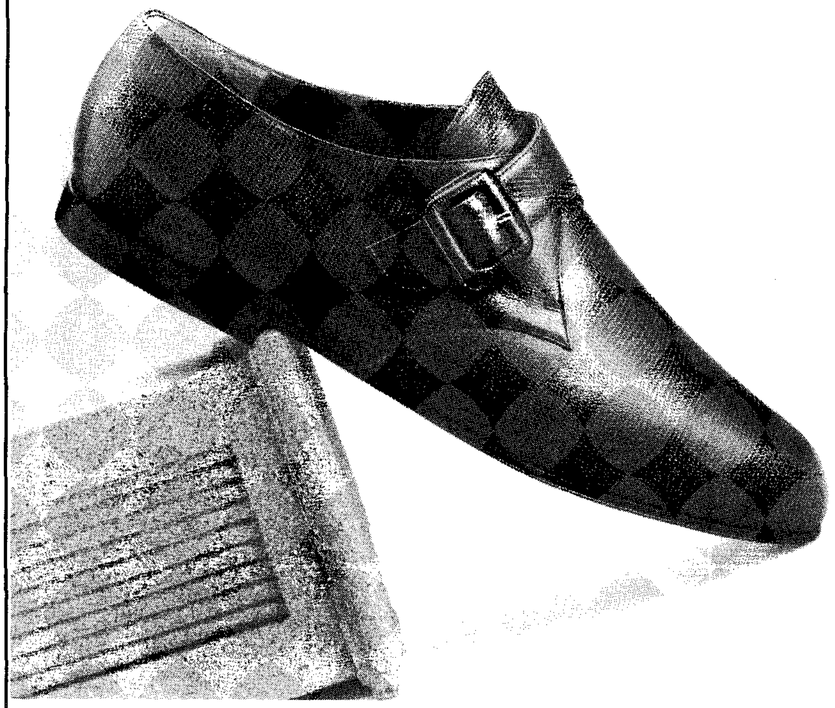

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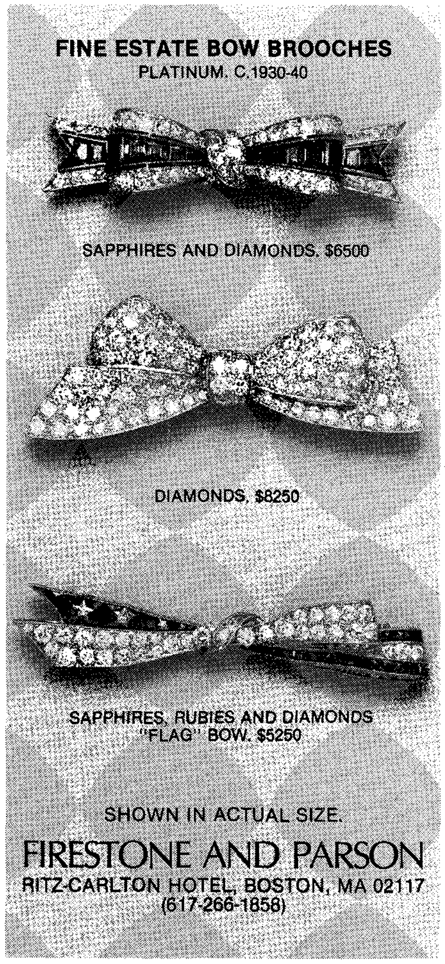
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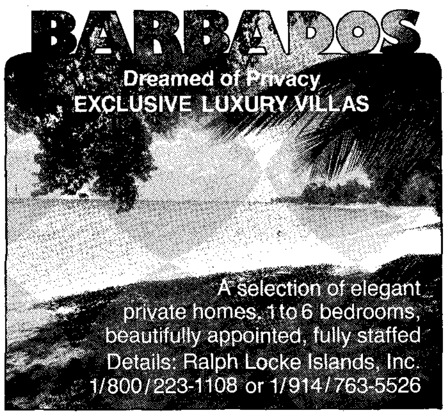
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with groundless ones, as "slamming" or "bashing"—were thus dismissed as the pursuit of a "great fashion." Because, at its inception, the United Nations had been a target of reactionaries and opportunists—against whom no U.N. leader had raised his voice—every subsequent critic would be characterized as isolationist or self-seeking. By now, however, the capital source of public misgiving toward the United Nations lay in the organization's own mismanagement and improvidence, and in its moral and intellectual failure before the world. In their refusal to take the meaning of public doubts, which were often an expression of residual interest in U.N. potential, United Nations officials stigmatized criticism without weighing it, and evaded, year after year, its legitimate content. The international enterprise was, in this way, denied all opportunity for reassessment and renewal.

In an interview in the *Times Magazine* of December 19, 1982, Urquhart stated his belief, inculcated by experiences in the Second World War, that "the worst way to make an argument is by reason and good information. You must appeal to people's emotions and to their fears of being made to look ridiculous." Not everyone will agree that reason is the worst foundation for advancing opinions, or prove a willing subject for such tactics. Urquhart's basic tenets for peacekeeping—enumerated by the *Times* at his retirement, in 1986—are all prohibitions, each introduced by the word "Don't." The depreciation of reason reiterated in that list, together with drastic figures of speech—"Don't dive into an empty pool," "Don't ask people you are dealing with to commit suicide"—illuminates the Secretariat mood.

While, in the Waldheim years, circumscription and negation were urged on the public as the organization's chief qualities, the supreme asset of the Secretary-General's office—moral example—was repeatedly devalued by the incumbent himself. "All I have is moral power. I have nothing behind me," Waldheim said, at a press conference reported by the *Times* of London, in 1977. "I can write letters to people. I can speak personally to governments, but I have not got the power to force anyone to do anything." Of this despondent assessment, the newspaper observed that "Dr. Waldheim gave the impression of a man resigned to being the spokesman for the largest body in the world equipped with the least number of teeth." Here, and in his writings, Waldheim speaks incidentally of moral power, as if it were a current of low wattage to be switched on at will. Moral distinction as an inward quality, arduously earned, and unvaunted, eludes him even as a concept, let alone as an attainment capable of moving nations.

Urquhart's own endorsement of Waldheim, as expressed to the press and in his respective prefaces to English-language editions of two books by Waldheim, seems equivocal on this paramount issue of Waldheim's moral stature. "Men like Urquhart call Waldheim courageous as well as decent," the Washington *Post* reported in January, 1980, going on to quote Urquhart's view that "the Secretary-General is the honest broker in the game of world politics and he really has to tailor his conduct to that world. He has to quiet their fears, angers, listen to 152 nations. He really has to see all sides. It doesn't appear to be a very heroic stance very often—and shouldn't, if you're going to do it right." Although it is difficult to see how, in such a context, moral leadership can be created, articles by the organization's advocates appearing in the American and British press in the immediate post-Waldheim years continue to strike the same note: "Waffle, but Still Worthwhile," by Sir Anthony Parsons, in the London *Times* of October 6, 1984, and "When Nothing Is Better than Nothing," by Conor Cruise O'Brien, in the same newspaper on October 23, 1985, are examples—the one abject, the other bombastic—of the irrationality to which United Nations apologists have been carried by their compulsion to vindicate the organization's passivity. Sir Anthony, a genial British representative at the United Nations in the late Waldheim years, concedes that "to the uninitiated" the "stupefying boredom" of U.N. proceedings "may well appear to be a grievous waste of time, money and effort"; but continues to hope, of U.N. encounters, that "this kind of thing must have some value." O'Brien, for his part, takes to task any lingering diehards who might ask "Why did the U.N. not *do* something to prevent those wars" in which "twenty million people are estimated to have died . . . since 1945?" O'Brien re-

sponds, "The question is misconceived. The United Nations cannot do anything, and never could," before proceeding to his contention that the U.N.'s value to its members "is its proven capacity to fail, and to be seen to fail." Of these U.N. failures—staged, according to O'Brien, to allow governments to modify an aggressive stance—he observes, "Shoddy, but probably preferable to the honest, brave courses whose rejection the United Nations theatre facilitated by obscuring." A later article by O'Brien, in the *Times Literary Supplement* of November 6-12, 1987, is almost exclusively concerned with extolling what he considers the usefulness of such failures: "For failure is really an essential part of the business of the United Nations."

The organization's importance to the world had thus shifted, in the view of its advocates, from the value of its mere continued existence, applauded in the nineteen-seventies, to a newly propounded and "essential" concept of failure. Under this new teaching, any United Nations potential for moral leadership is, moreover, quite discarded.

The public has found it less easy to exclude from consideration, as O'Brien does, the victims of this policy of failure. Beyond the "twenty million" fatalities relegated by O'Brien to unpondered oblivion, the era since the Second World War has encompassed the displacement of entire populations, the invasion and violent destruction of ancient societies and cultures, and the mutual expansion of anarchy and authoritarianism—nearly all of this occurring without intervention, or even discussion, by the United Nations. Since 1945, many more than twenty million persons have lived in the clutch of arbitrary rule, under threat of torture, detention, and death, uncomforted by any gesture from the vast organization whose sworn duty it is to speak in their defense. The most fearful aspect of this chaos is its growth and acceleration. Its foremost victim is civilization.

There is no evidence that the United Nations' shoddiness found "probably preferable" by Conor Cruise O'Brien—who holds over us, should we disagree with his cruel and tendentious argument, the threat of Armageddon—has been the sole alternative to global extinction, or that the interest of the great powers in avoiding confrontation could be served only by such an

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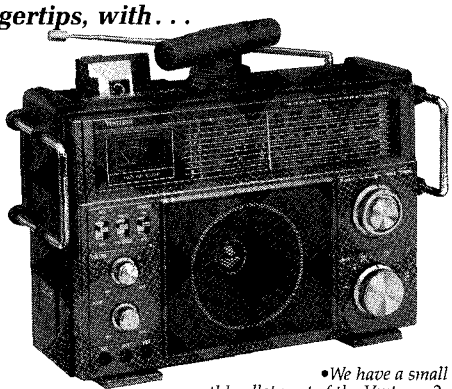

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unwieldy, inept, and often foolish instrument as the present United Nations. Still less need we assume that citizens will choose indefinitely to extend and embellish the life of an organism unresponsive to contemporary dangers and indifferent to its own quality, whose degree of usefulness exists in huge disproportion to its resources and opportunities. What political utility the United Nations has shown over the past quarter century has allowed humanity to glimpse, merely, far greater possibilities inherent in the suppressed power of a concept that now cries out for new and rational forms.

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As the Waldheim era closed at the U.N., however, the world's public was urged by prominent commentators to swallow its misgivings—and, indeed, its instincts for decency and common sense. And, in February, 1982, shortly after Waldheim's departure from the United Nations, a New York *Times* editorial, which opened by deploring the futility of U.N. proceedings, concluded with the assertion "If every year's palaver produced one good idea and suffocated a dozen of the bad, boredom should be tolerable." No other great public institution has received such indulgence.

ON January 17, 1986, six weeks before the evidence of Waldheim's concealed activities under Hitler appeared in the world's press, an extensive appreciation, by Conor Cruise O'Brien, of Waldheim's character and Secretary-Generalship was published in the *Times Literary Supplement* under the title "The Very Model of a Secretary-General." O'Brien, whose long association with United Nations affairs includes Secretariat service, seized the occasion of reviewing Waldheim's memoirs, "In the Eye of the Storm," to expound his enthusiasm for the former Secretary-General's performance in his U.N. post. O'Brien's essay has importance not only because it corresponds to the conception of the U.N.'s role dictated to us, with the same assurance, by United Nations spokesmen of the past quarter century but because it epitomizes that favorable view of Kurt Waldheim which—although it would soon be abandoned—had been propounded by U.N. leaders for many years; and which indubitably would yet hold sway had it not been for the irruption of momentous and irrefutable truth.

In his article O'Brien, having sought to neutralize skepticism with some introductory derision of Waldheim's charmless persona, quickly warmed to his theme—his conviction that the reliable qualities he had long distinguished in Kurt Waldheim, and Waldheim's capacity for inspiring trust, were admirable attributes in a United Nations leader: "With Waldheim, you knew where you were; with Waldheim there would be no surprises." And O'Brien deplored the Chinese veto that deprived us of a third Waldheim term. There is grim entertainment in this, even if—as O'Brien merrily remarks of Waldheim's own writings—"the entertainment is not always intentional." O'Brien, no less than Waldheim—although presumably from different causes—is mesmerized by negation. Referring to Waldheim's postwar recruitment into the Austrian Foreign Affairs Ministry, headed by Karl Gruber, O'Brien tells us: "The grounds for Gruber's esteem, reported by Waldheim, are significant. 'If Waldheim tells me we can't do anything about a problem, I believe him.' So," O'Brien continues, "from the beginning of his career, Waldheim's strong suit was already apparent in his respect for *limits*" (O'Brien's italics).

It will be remembered that Waldheim himself, at the time of his election to the United Nations post in 1971, had drawn governmental attention to his particular grasp of limits. And that Joseph Kraft, in his prompt and prescient condemnation of Waldheim's appointment, had noted this fact in a spirit that has, in contrast to O'Brien's, been fully vindicated. That limitation is not always an arbitrary factor, and that the boundaries conceived by Waldheim and O'Brien might, to a more detached or visionary observer, appear susceptible of extension is not considered by O'Brien in his 1986 article; nor does he give thought to the possibility that Waldheim's phenomenal caution may be dictated by elements of which he, O'Brien, is ignorant. His tone is hectoring: we are to understand—as it were, once and for all—that in most issues coming before it there was "nothing much the U.N. could do" other than provide a sounding board and some relief services (services that would, in fact, in many instances not have been required had the U.N. been able to realize its potential); that any perceptible initiative from U.N. leaders might dangerously "rock the boat"; and that the principal task of a Secretary-General is to ingratiate himself with governments, in particular with those of the great powers.

O'Brien, like Urquhart, felt that Waldheim had been underestimated. Like Urquhart, he favorably contrasted Waldheim's "discretion"—"such habits of discretion that in the end you can no longer be revealing even when you decide to write your memoirs"—with what he saw as the provocative activism of Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General, pointing to the dénouement of Hammarskjöld's difficulties in the post-colonial chaos of the Congo, as if that nullified his previous achievements. It was presumably to such an attitude that Hammarskjöld had addressed himself in 1957, on his unanimous reëlection to a second term at the United Nations: "If a mountain wall is once climbed, later failures do not undo the fact that it has been shown that it *can* be climbed."

Almost from the moment of his death, in 1961, Hammarskjöld had been cited in United Nations circles as an aberration, not an exemplar. With the Waldheim years, however, allusion to Hammarskjöld acquired, at the U.N., a persistent note of disparagement as the effort to rationalize the organization's abnegations under Waldheim exacted some repudiation of Hammarskjöld's contrasting resourcefulness. In the New York *Times Magazine* of September 13, 1981, Brian Urquhart decried what he felt was an excessive public appreciation of Hammarskjöld: "Everybody now thinks of Hammarskjöld as a huge success. The fact is that he became a total lame duck. The Russians and the French wouldn't speak to him and a lot of other people didn't want anything to do with him. By the end of his tenure he was out." And Urquhart went on, in the same article, to state his conviction that "in terms of usefulness, not glamor," Kurt Waldheim had "actually been the best Secretary-General."

WHILE encomiums appeared in the press, pronounced by advocates who at times seemed crazed with self-justification, the mismanagement of the organization—confirmed in a flow of internal (and ineffective) reports—could not be concealed from its personnel. The entrenched concept of establishment allegiance and reverence for the Secretary-General, the promptings of self-interest, and the system of political favor governing senior appointments to the United Nations staff precluded the likelihood of resistance to policies of the Waldheim era in the upper levels of the Secretariat. In the remaining segment of the staff, intimidation and bureaucratic conformity had long reduced the spirit not of resentment but of opposition. The multiplying abuses of these years, however, and their consequences for U.N. personnel, revived a decent unrest in some members of those intermediate and junior grades where selection was not yet entirely dominated by geographical and political lottery.

In 1976, as Kurt Waldheim travelled the world in search of governmental support for his reëlection, a near-hiatus of leadership intensified the demoralization of headquarters personnel. Given the Secretary-General's dubious conduct of his office, the long dissatisfaction of the staff could at this juncture have been rallied—had it received even token support from U.N. leaders—as a factor against Waldheim's second election. That this possibility was never even entertained is expressive of the Secretariat's weakness. In the autumn of that year, General Assembly delegates themselves showed disinclination to shoulder the blame mechanically attributed to them by Secretariat leaders—a United States representative, Mrs. Ersa H. Poston, laying responsibility for the Secretariat chaos at Waldheim's door and citing his unbounded accessibility to national pressures.

In December, 1976, Kurt Waldheim was elected to his second U.N. term. The New York *Times* greeted his reëlection in an editorial and reported that "the United States delegate, William W. Scranton, hailed Mr. Waldheim's reelection, saying he would have 'another excellent term' and adding: 'This will be important to the high standing of the United Nations, which he has always upheld.' Similar support came from members of the Soviet delegation."

During Waldheim's second term, staff representatives, led by Lowell

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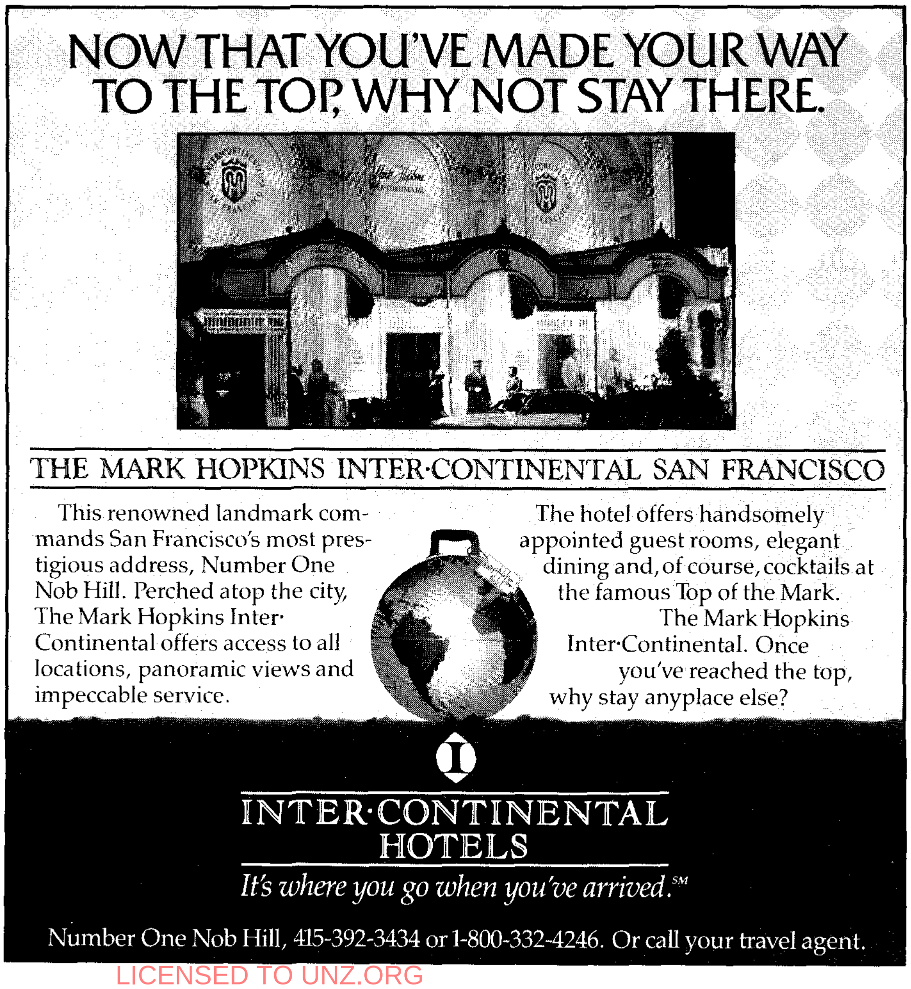

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Flanders, a young American in a junior professional post at the Secretariat, struggled to redress the adverse state of the international civil service. Thwarted in their negotiations with the United Nations administration, they attempted to bring the Secretariat's condition to responsible attention—by such recourse to the press as U.N. restrictions allow, by individual meetings with the envoys of the "more serious" member states, and by formal appeals to the appropriate bodies of the General Assembly. (A 1950 attempt, by staff representatives, to bring their complaints against the first Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, to Assembly attention had infuriated the organization's leaders, who, openly threatening reprisal, sought to frustrate it. Staff spokesmen were enabled to express their disquiet to the Assembly during the latter Waldheim years by a special provision enacted by the Assembly itself in consequence of staff agitation.) All these efforts failed in their object—of generating wide concern and consequent reforms—the public remaining unaware of the scale and intensity of staff discontent with the United Nations leadership. The spectacle of a staff body vainly seeking the proper use of its resources in the organization's service and soliciting, in effect, the intercession of the organization's governing council to prevent continued mismanagement by its appointed leaders was not new at the United Nations.

The documented account of the staff's relations with the U.N. administration provides, as yet, the only candid record of the organization's inner life during its years under Waldheim. The plight of the Secretariat staff was also set forth in those years by academic and internal studies—notably, in 1977, by Theodor Meron, of the New York University School of Law, in his book "The United Nations Secretariat"—but all such appeals and warnings were disregarded.

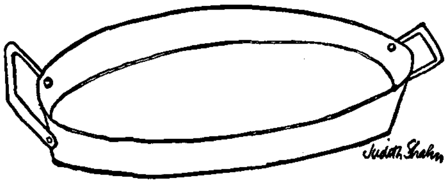
In the late nineteen-seventies, the U.N. staff union in New York engaged the American labor negotiator Theodore Kheel to represent it in its dealings with the U.N. administration. Kheel—worldly, skeptical, confident, and an unlikely audience for the condescension of U.N. leaders—had also represented staff interests at the European office of the U.N. in Geneva, and he accepted the assignment for a nominal fee. His experience with the United Nations hierarchy—which he likens to "the court of King Henry VIII"—and in particular with its propensity for abrogating formal agreements on basic matters of staff rights, moved him, in an interview with Morton Mintz, in the Washington *Post* on February 18, 1979, to compare Waldheim unfavorably with Jimmy Hoffa, the late chief of the Teamsters Union: "Every employer said that Hoffa may be a bum, a thief, but that if he gives you his word, he honors it."

"The thing that utterly amazed me," Kheel said recently, "was the position taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to disregard the elementary established rights of employees: that the agency created to maintain standards of human decency and to bring about peace by negotiated settlement would violate its own agreements and see no necessity for compliance with its own word."

Like others before him, Kheel noted the effect, on the organization's potential, of a demoralized Secretariat, remarking, in 1980, of Waldheim's foredoomed overtures to Iran in the hostage crisis: "Waldheim would be a better international mediator if he'd eschew the role of ayatollah toward his own staff."

The correspondence between Theodore Kheel, on the one hand, and Kurt Waldheim and his legal officers, on the other, is again a significant record of the organization's mood in those years, and of its attitude to its legal and ethical obligations. Kheel has said of his attempts to negotiate with the Secretary-General, "He answered by not responding to the points I made and deliberately refusing my persistent efforts to get him to respond." This was not to be the last example of Waldheim's recourse to that technique.

IN August, 1979, Alicja Wesolowska, a young Polish member of the United Nations staff, was detained by Polish authorities as she visited friends in Warsaw en route to a U.N. assignment in Mongolia. Held incommunicado until the following March, she was then convicted, in a closed military court, of having "contacts with foreign intelligence." The charge, for which no evidence was produced, was apparently without substance; and is thought to represent retaliation, by the Polish government, against Wesolowska's show of independence from Soviet-bloc pressures during her United Nations employment. It should not, in any case, have affected her right to due process. She received a sentence of seven years.

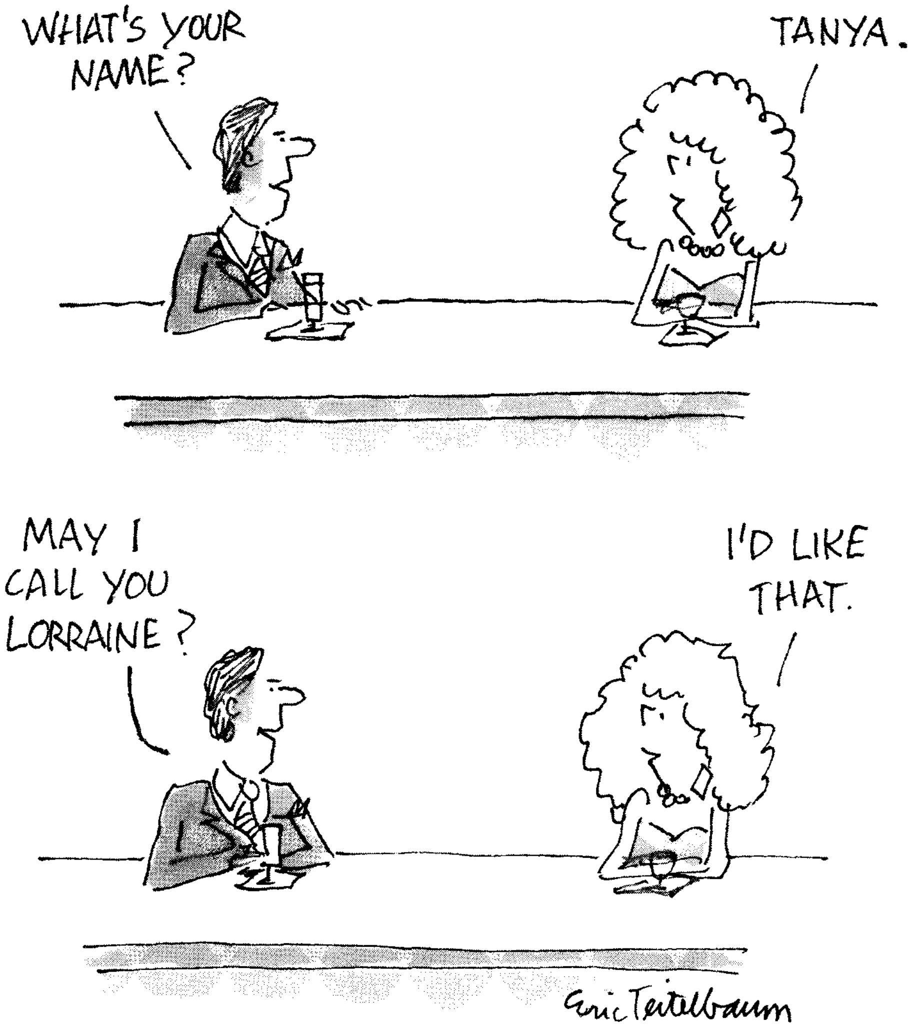


Alicja Wesolowska's detention and trial occurred in flagrant violation of her elementary rights, and of United Nations covenants, to which Poland is a signatory, regarding the rights and immunities of international civil servants. In this episode, the Secretary-General showed himself without influence and extremely reluctant to assert principles that touched the safety and standing of every U.N. employee, including himself. Only as a result of insistent staff protests, and of public pressure as the story was aired in the Western press, was Waldheim induced to make a minimal appeal to the Polish authorities. While one must wonder whether his unwillingness to articulate principle in this basic case was linked to fear, it must be said that United Nations reports on conditions of human rights in Poland, submitted after Waldheim's departure, consistently minimized the Polish government's violations, in the years of Solidarity's hardest struggle; and that in the Wesolowska episode Waldheim's senior circle presented, as ever, a united front with the Secretary-General.

Investigations, by staff representatives, into the case of Wesolowska brought to light about twenty other instances of U.N. employees who, undefended and unreported by the administration, had been arbitrarily seized and imprisoned while on assignment. These developments precipitated, on December 6, 1979, a crowded rally of Secretariat staff for the purpose of making—for the first time in many years—a concerted appeal to the U.N. leadership for a return to the founding principles of the international civil service. One of the most significant meetings held at the United Nations during the Waldheim decade, this solemn gathering was unnoticed in the press—being reported by the New York *Times* two months later, on February 14, 1980, only in consequence of a vehement Soviet protest over the event. Soon after this rally, a staff representative was summoned by one of Waldheim's chief deputies, who cautioned him to leave the matter to the Secretary-General. Staff leaders, however, continued to press for the restoration of Wesolowska's rights.

Alicja Wesolowska served nearly five years of her sentence. Following her release, she eventually received from the United Nations an assignment to a hardship mission in central Africa. Declining this assignment, and expressing her wish to resume her duties in New York, she received instructions to join another field mission, in Cyprus. As she now required medical treatment, this proved impossible. Although it was made clear to her that her presence at headquarters would be intolerable to the United Nations administration, because of pressure from the Polish authorities, she made her way to New York, in 1986; and there underwent medical treatment. Her efforts to rejoin the United Nations headquarters staff were countered with attempts by the U.N. administration to dispatch her to field assignments, and with the proposal to demote her from professional duties to a typing post. Earlier this year, her resistance at an end, she accepted—in the U.N. phrase—an "agreed termination."

Of the numerous other U.N. employees missing on field assignments, several are believed to have died in prison. In the past decade, such cases have apparently tripled, without effective intervention by the United Nations administration.


WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
TANYA.
MAY I CALL YOU LORRAINE?
I'D LIKE THAT.
Eric Teitelbaum

• •

A LIE, having no reality, is difficult to repeat with consistency. And Kurt Waldheim, in the accounts of his past offered during his U.N. tenure, had plainly signalled, if not the truth of his years under Hitler, at least the areas of concealment. Even his assertion, from the time of his United Nations appointment, that he had been invalided out of the German Army at the end of 1941 with a wound received on the Russian front, and had then pursued his studies at Vienna until 1945, was subject to variation in dates and theatres of war service. In his early years at the U.N., he was circumspect in allusions to the events of his youth—mere reference to which by others was greeted as an offense by his U.N. deputies. (Objecting to an exposition, by the present writer, in the New York *Times Book Review* of August 25, 1974, of United Nations acts of censorship against Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the Secretary-General's official spokesman deplored public mention even of war service that Waldheim himself had not denied: "In addition, Shirley Hazzard refers to Mr. Waldheim as 'an officer in Hitler's army on the Russian front,' which is a very injurious accusation, and can only lead the readers of this article to have adverse feelings toward the Secretary-General." The reference in question was not, of course, an "accusation" but a statement of uncontested fact.)

As Waldheim's story went unchallenged, however, throughout his first years at the United Nations, he was emboldened; and began to allude freely to the admitted portion of his early experience, and even to elaborate his previous account with inventions and additions that, while casting him in a favorable or pathetic light, sailed ever closer to the wind. In the years following his election to a second term at the U.N., Waldheim, in his public remarks, provided numerous clues to his past life; and, to a curious extent, told his hidden story in the press.

As reported in an interview in 1975, by Barbara Kerr, for *People* magazine, Waldheim's "law studies were interrupted by the fascist takeover of Austria in 1938 when his father, a civil servant and anti-Nazi leader, was jailed for two years." (Following the Anschluss, Waldheim's father, who had been a political adherent of the conservative nationalist Kurt von Schuschnigg, was dismissed from his post as a school superintendent. He was detained by the Nazis, on more than one occasion, for a period of hours or days.) The article continued: "In 1942 [on the Russian front] a grenade exploded near Kurt's right leg, and he was sent home. 'It saved my life.' He could not walk normally for a year, but was able to resume his law courses at the university where he met his future wife. . . . 'Our young years were not easy. Do you know that my wife never went to a ball as a young wom-

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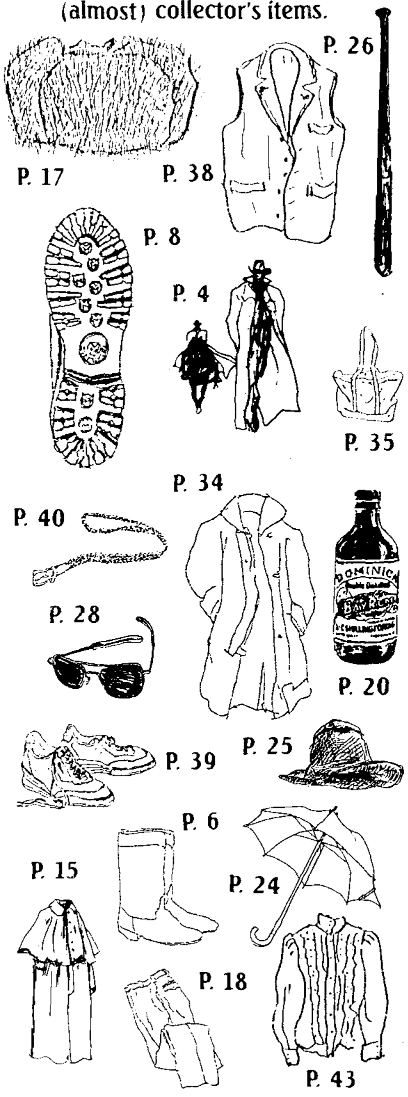

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an. Never! For me it was the same.' "

In his autobiography, "In the Eye of the Storm," published in the United States early in 1986, Waldheim asserts that, following his wound, "it took several months in a sanatorium in the mountains before my leg started to heal properly. I walked with a bad limp, and to my undisguised relief was discharged from further service at the front. I made a formal request to be permitted to resume my law studies and take my Master's degree and, rather to my surprise, this was granted. I still had my pay as a lieutenant and this helped to see me through. . . . It was impossible to leave Austria." According to recent research, Waldheim was wounded on the Russian front on December 14, 1941. After two months' convalescence, he reported to his unit at the beginning of March, 1942; and was ordered to Belgrade, where he took up his new duties on March 14th.

During his U.N. years, in two particular interviews—published respectively in the Washington *Post* of January 18, 1980, and the New York *Times Magazine* of September 13, 1981—Waldheim seemed to be courting exposure. The *Post* quoted him as saying:

> Very soon I was wounded on the east front and that probably saved my life. I couldn't walk for a long time and I was released from active service in 1941.

The *Times* stated:

> Mr. Waldheim says that his father, a conservative Roman Catholic school official, spoke out publicly against the Nazis, and he himself joined the anti-Nazi Austrian Youth Movement. . . . At the beginning of World War II, young Kurt was drafted into the German Army. "Fortunately," Mr. Waldheim says, "I didn't last long. My unit moved to the Russian front in the winter of 1942. I was badly wounded in the ankle, I couldn't walk, and they gave me a medical discharge."

In these extensive interviews, Waldheim restated the false version of his war service in uncompromising if divergent terms. The tardy innovation of his membership in "the anti-Nazi Austrian Youth Movement" was still more audacious. It is clear that Waldheim, had he belonged to any organization dedicated to resisting Nazi rule, would have flourished that fact throughout his postwar career, rather than disclosing it in an aside at the end of his decade at the United Nations. (In his autobiography Waldheim makes passing reference to his youthful membership, before the Anschluss, in an Austrian youth group supporting Kurt von Schuschnigg; and this is echoed, but not developed, in the "white book" prepared, in 1987, in Waldheim's defense by officials of the Austrian Foreign Affairs Ministry. It is possible that support prior to the Anschluss for a conservative nationalist and his party has been given the complexion of a post-Anschluss resistance to the evil doctrines of Nazism.) It is also apparent that a young man with such a record, who had been—as he asserted—"harassed continuously by the Gestapo," would not have been appointed a staff officer in the German Army, and in an Intelligence position, without first tendering firm evidence of his acceptance of Nazi precepts. Waldheim's claim to organized anti-Nazi activity, which might have been challenged at once by some informed reader of the interview, was refuted by Hillel Seidman, a survivor and scholar of the Nazi persecutions and one of the first writers to probe Waldheim's deceptions. In 1982, in his book "United Nations: Perfidy and Perversion," Dr. Seidman reported that "the anti-Nazi Austrian Youth Movement" had never existed. No attention was paid at the U.N. to this disclosure, or to other clear indications of Waldheim's untruthfulness.

Waldheim told the Washington *Post* that "my father wanted me to be a doctor and I refused. I said, 'Daddy, I cannot see blood.' " The interview resumed: "After Waldheim got out of the German army he continued his studies and met his wife at that time. 'After that, things went perfectly well.' " Waldheim met his future wife, Elisabeth Ritschel, in the winter of 1942-43, when he returned on leave to Vienna from his duties with the German Intelligence staff at Arsakli, near the port city of Salonika. (Salonika's Jewish population of fifty thousand would be, by mid-1943, almost entirely deported by the Germans—a crime with which, according to the researches of the historian Robert Herzstein, Waldheim was apparently unconnected.) Elisabeth Ritschel was the daughter of a staunch Nazi; and, at the time of her meeting with Waldheim, she had—as she acknowledged to the press in June, 1986—herself been a member of the Nazi Party for more than a year. Before his posting to the environs of Salonika, Waldheim had been assigned to a German assault on Yugoslav partisans on the Kozara plaeau, in West Bosnia. Waldheim's precise association with the Kozara operation, which culminated in the massacre or deportation of tens of thousands of civilians, is not known. His own statements regarding it are contradictory. In April, 1943, following his leave in Vienna, Waldheim returned to active duty in the Balkans, where renewed German onslaughts against resistance fighters, and the events of the imminent Italian collapse, would combine to create one of the bloodiest phases of the war. It is in this period of his life, by Waldheim's account, that "things went perfectly well."

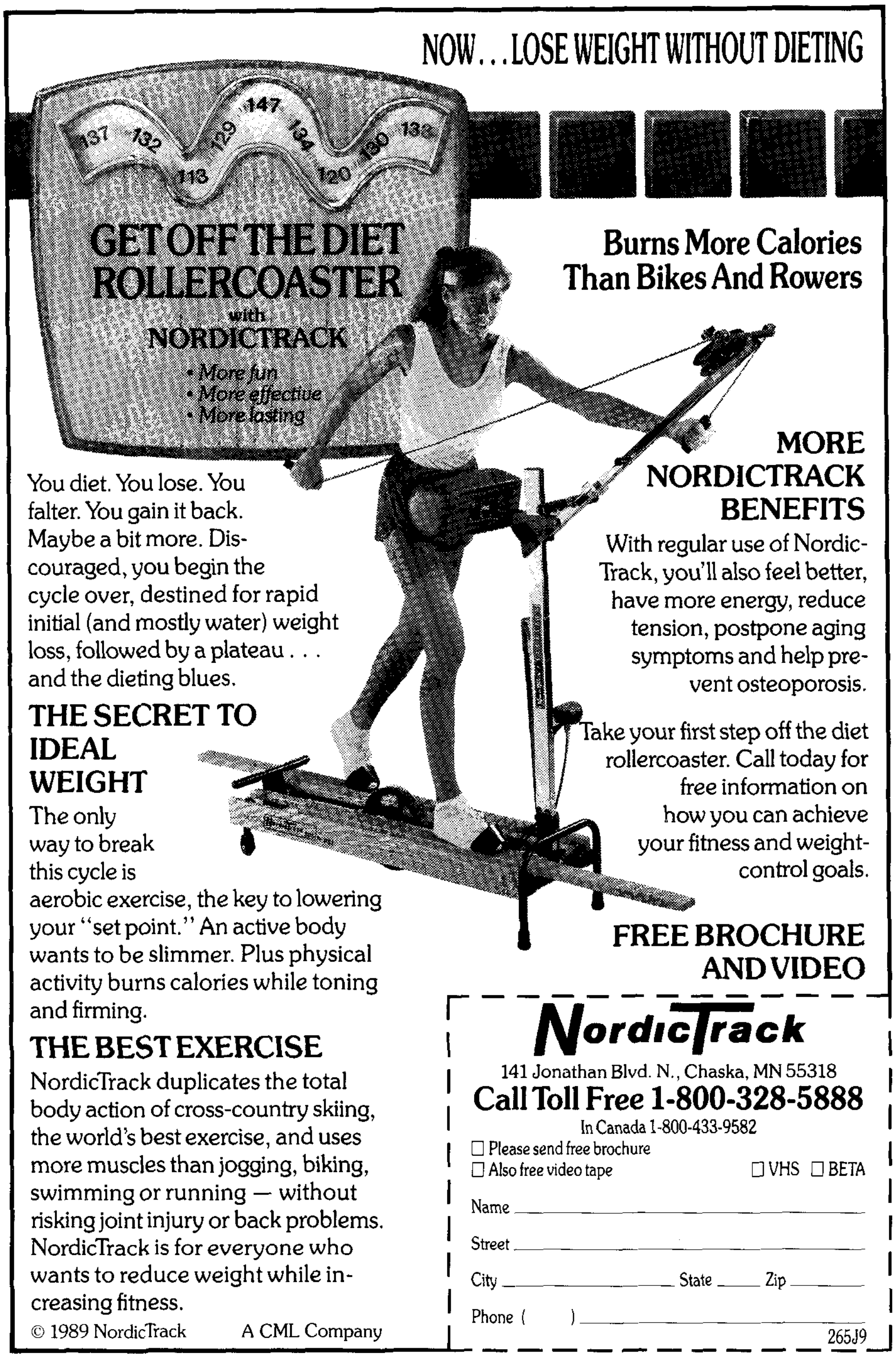
It is hard not to see, in the risks gratuitously taken by Waldheim in making assertions that flew in the face of history, a compulsion to test his fate. Bizarre also are Waldheim's allusions (conspicuous in the Washington *Post* interview, in which his wife emphatically participated) to hidden aspects of his life—allusions to be appreciated only by the other person cognizant of the truth:

> People of course now see me as Secretary-General in this interesting function, important, etcetera, but who knows what I went through until I reached that point?

The interviewer, ingenuously noting that "it is hard to find much material on Waldheim," recalls, "Above all, Waldheim is a man who once said, 'Long experience has taught me that an abrupt gesture, an ill-chosen word or an unthinking remark can prove disastrous.' "

A curious feature of the Waldheim imposture has been the complicity of husband and wife in their long agreement to lie without compunction, to counter truth with a show of histrionic outrage, and to live continually in the shadow of a traumatic unmasking. In this aspect of their story we draw near to its inner, Dickensian reality—as when, in "Our Mutual Friend," the ruthless Lammles, of "shining reputation," exchange one candid glance in a mirror: "Next moment they quietly eyed each other, as if they, the principals, had had no part in that expressive transaction."

ON November 26, 1980, a United States representative, Stephen J. Solarz—prompted by his constituents, and by Hillel Seidman—wrote to Kurt Waldheim, at the United Nations, and to the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, in Washington, re-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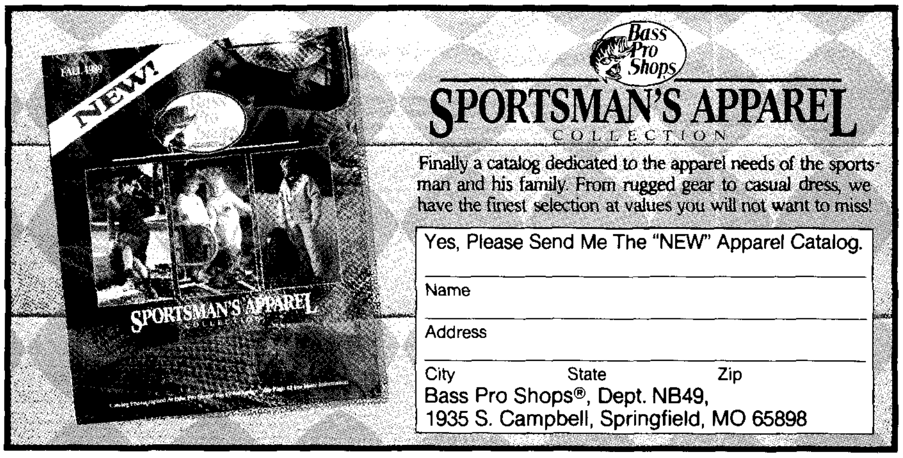
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questing information on Waldheim's activities under Hitler. This inquiry was made in the wake of an article in *The New Republic* of January 19th of that year, in which the present writer stated that Waldheim had been a member of Nazi groups and had served in the German Army "in various campaigns" of the Second World War; and of a further assertion, by Martin Peretz, the editor-in-chief and publisher of *The New Republic*, in the same magazine on September 27, 1980, affirming that Waldheim had belonged to the Nazi movement.

On December 19th, Waldheim replied. Dismissing the statements in *The New Republic* as "slanders," and noting that the president of the United Nations Association of the United States had characterized my own assertion as a "McCarthyesque lie," he went on to offer Solarz the following equivocation:

> You will, I am sure, agree with me that it would be odd, to say the least, if the Government of the United States and all other Member Governments voted twice to elect me as Secretary-General of the United Nations if they had been in any doubt as to my character and background.

It is indeed odd, to say the least. It is one of the oddest circumstances of a singular era.

Waldheim's deflection of responsibility to the national agencies charged with investigating him, and the citation of their endorsement—or complicity—as proof of his rectitude, was a bold card Waldheim would play again. In March, 1986, as details of Waldheim's concealed past under Hitler appeared in the Western press, the *International Herald Tribune* reported:

> Mr. Waldheim said he had been checked by the secret services of all major powers before he became U.N. secretary-general in 1972, and he asked how they would not have passed him for the post if he had been found to have "a single brown spot."

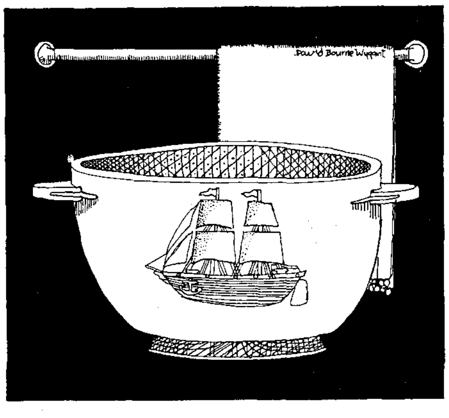
In his December, 1980, letter to Solarz, Waldheim proceeded to state that he had never been associated in any way with the Nazi Youth Movement; and to repeat the fiction that his war wound, sustained on the Russian front, had incapacitated him for military service after 1941. One imagines with what reluctance Waldheim made this first formal written commitment to his long imposture.

Despite that denial, and his characterization of *The New Republic's* references to his concealed past as slanderous, Waldheim took no legal step against the magazine or the authors of these articles; nor did he request a retraction of the statements at issue. As the charges were repeated, however, in an uncompromising article, in *The New Republic* of March 7, 1981, again by Martin Peretz, Waldheim did seek, through a private emissary, to intimidate the magazine with the threat of a possible libel suit. Peretz has recounted his response: "That if Waldheim sued us, he would find himself in discovery proceedings. That was the last we heard about a libel suit. Now we know why."

In his memoirs Waldheim reports that, at "a personal, private meeting" with Solarz, arranged as a result of Solarz' concern, "I explained my background in detail to the Congressman." That explanation presumably recounted some version of Waldheim's fictitious history. (In April, 1986, after Waldheim's story had been revealed in the press, Solarz would again write to Waldheim, to demand an explanation of his compounded deception; and would receive a reply of unregenerate falsehood.)

On December 31, 1980, the Legislative Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency had replied to Representative Solarz, acknowledging his request and stating: "We believe that Waldheim was not a member of the Nazi Youth Movement, nor was he involved in anti-Jewish activities. We have no intelligence reporting in detail on Waldheim's military service." The letter went on to echo—as "gleaned" from "German open source materials"—Waldheim's own version of his military career.

The vagueness of the C.I.A., although matched by the incuriosity of the United Nations, was in contrast to intuitive as well as informed doubts raised outside official circles at that time by Waldheim's personality and conduct, and by the evident lacunae in his story. Graham Greene, writing to me on January 17, 1981, with regard to "that awful man at the head of the United Nations," observed, "I notice that Kurt Waldheim omits from *Who's Who* whatever career he had between 1939 and 1945. Can you give me details? Why does he omit all this from *Who's Who*?" Had Waldheim, as he claimed, attended a university from 1941 until the close of the war, that fact would have been eagerly recorded in his written rather than merely in his oral statements.



In the last years of Waldheim's Secretary-Generalship, the absence of U.N. initiatives in the world's crises was increasingly viewed by thoughtful citizens as dangerous and incomprehensible. Breaking out of the web of U.N. excuse, the more reflective elements of the world's press also began to seek the meaning of the organization's passivity, and to trace Waldheim's role in it. In October, 1979, deploring the tragic condition of Cambodia, the British newspaper the *Guardian* observed:

> As so often when anything important is taking place in the world, the U.N. itself is silent. It is aided, abetted and guided in that silence by the inactivity of the Secretary-General himself. . . . Why does not Kurt Waldheim make a strenuous effort to overcome the deadly punctilio in which his office has taken refuge?

In 1981, Kurt Waldheim again travelled the world seeking governmental support for a renewed term at the United Nations. In the summer of that year, the New York *Times* reported that he "came back, according to aides, with only one outright promise of support, from Lord Carrington, the British Foreign Secretary. . . . In the other capitals, save Peking, heads of governments gave Mr. Waldheim the diplomatic equivalents of nods and winks to let him know they would not oppose his bid. In Moscow, *Pravda* coupled his name approvingly with that of Leonid I. Brezhnev and cited their joint efforts in seeking peace." Two years earlier, Soviet troops had entered Afghanistan, where they would remain for a decade.

The *Times*—which had reported concern over the Secretary-General's "active campaigning"—found that "at the higher levels of the United Nations Secretariat he has more defenders than critics."

In late 1981, as the Security Council ook up the election of a new Secretary-General, Waldheim had the support of our of its five permanent members: Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and he United States. The fifth member, he government of China—explaining hat "China has no personal prejudice against Waldheim" but could not accept manipulation "by one or two superpowers"—used its power of veto against Waldheim's bid for a third erm. "Through that Chinese *coup de grâce*," Conor Cruise O'Brien would ubsequently write, "the United Naions lost a diplomatist, and an internaional civil servant, of great experience." The loss was not widely felt outside the organization, or in the staff body.

The new, and fifth, Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, came—ike his three immediate predecessors—from a long official connection with the United Nations and its Secretariat.

It had been conjectured that Waldheim, in retirement, would assume some role with the international community at Vienna, where, during his Secretary-Generalship, United Nations offices had swelled to a veritable city along the Danube. This did not occur. In 1983, Waldheim helped to organize a group called the Interaction Council of Former Heads of Government, the declared purpose of which was to offer experienced counsel to incumbent world leaders. Its thirty members did not include former leaders of the United States or the Soviet Union. To Waldheim, long swaddled in the self-importance of the U.N. cocoon and eager for the prominence of public office, such a group—with its suggestion of superannuation or rejection—must have seemed merely a provisional setting. In 1986, he was supported by the conservative People's Party as a prospective candidate for the largely ceremonial office of President of Austria. As a candidate of the same party, he had lost the Presidential election in 1971; and from that defeat had gone on to become Secretary-General of the United Nations.

With Waldheim's renewed nomination for the Austrian Presidency, his early record attracted, from his political opponents in particular, a degree of attention that it had not received in his years at the United Nations. On March 3, 1986, nine weeks before the

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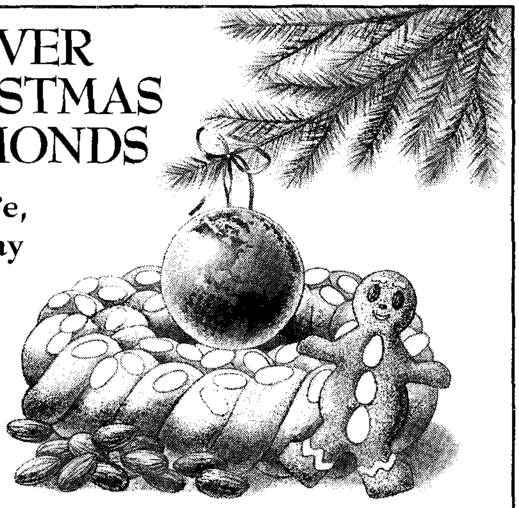

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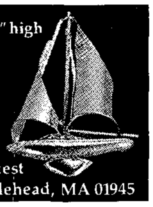

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Presidential election, the Austrian magazine *Profil* published the first detailed revelations—by Hubertus Czernin, who would subsequently write at length on the matter—of Waldheim's concealed past. The following day, the New York *Times* reported in detail Waldheim's prewar membership in two Nazi-affiliated groups and his involvement in Hitler's campaign in the Balkans; and the story was aired around the world. Of these disclosures, Waldheim declared, "The timing of it is perfect. For forty years these things have rested." While the timing was in fact ordered by Waldheim himself, who had had forty years in which to tell the truth, it is undeniable that matters resolutely ignored throughout Waldheim's decade at the United Nations were sifted and found imperative when he sought his present office in the broader light of "the real world."

Of his membership in Nazi groups, Waldheim, who had formerly and indignantly denied such a connection, now responded, "And even if it were true, well, so what?" In the ensuing days, he explained to an interviewer that he had not previously recounted these matters because they were "too boring." Of German atrocities against partisans and civilians during the Balkans campaign, he later observed, "I also knew that many German soldiers were trapped and executed in a similar way."

"There is a manner of doing evil," Anthony Trollope observed, "so easy and indifferent as absolutely to quell the general feeling respecting it. A man shall tell you that he has committed a murder in a tone so careless as to make you feel that a murder is nothing." Such a spell is cast with some frequency over the modern electorate. After failing to obtain the required majority at the polls in May, thus necessitating a runoff, Kurt Waldheim was elected President of Austria on June 8, 1986, receiving almost fifty-four per cent of the vote. He was then sixty-seven years old.

SINCE truth was set in motion regarding Kurt Waldheim's past, his former associates at the United Nations have discussed his character in new and adverse terms. Brian Urquhart, who in the wake of Waldheim's exposure has described his former chief's "insatiable ambition for public-office," "monstrous ego," an "hide of a rhinoceros," speaks in hi recent memoirs of "fantasies" apparently entertained among Waldheim' senior colleagues at the U.N.

> We saw him as two people: Waldhein Mark I, a scheming, ambitious, duplicitou egomaniac ready to do anything for advantage or public acclaim; and Waldhein Mark II, the statesmanlike leader wh kept his head while all about him wer losing theirs and was prepared to follow our advice in great international crises These and other fantasies seem rather les funny now.

The world's public, being provide by United Nations spokesmen wit only the second of these supposed fantasies, had no means of challenging th reality. Urquhart has related elsewher that, having been assured by Waldheim himself, in his United Nation years, that published references to th Secretary-General's hidden past wer unfounded, "I accepted his answer as being true, not believing that anyone who had attained a position o such responsibility would lie about a matter of such importance." Reverenc for position, injurious to every aspect o United Nations activity, in this cas seems to have imposed an unusual degree of credulity; and one must wonder, by extension, if this is the spirit in which United Nations negotiations are carried on with heads of government. It would be hard to discover elsewhere, in the public of the post-Watergate age, such unquestioning trust in the word of elected leaders. In any case, Waldheim had already given ample evidence of his untruthfulness.

In March, 1988—as, at the fiftieth anniversary of the Anschluss, thousands of Austrians themselves called for Waldheim's resignation—two notable condemnations of Waldheim appeared in letters published in the British newspaper the *Independent.* Both letters touch profoundly on the public's inability to obtain timely information, and to form accurate impressions, regarding the United Nations.

Robert Rhodes James, a Member of Parliament and a former official of the United Nations, stated with reference to Waldheim's comments in a press interview:

> Waldheim described me as "sort of a speechwriter." In fact, in addition to my other duties as principal officer in his executive office for 10 years, I was his only speechwriter. It was not a pleasant assignment, but my task—on behalf of the U.N. —was to stop the Secretary-General consistently making a fool of himself, or, much

nore important, the world organization. We were not always successful.... Waldheim was certainly “a sort of Secreary-General” of the most loathsome kind.

He is now “a sort of President of Ausria” and they are welcome to him. Had it not been for the Chinese refusal to tolerate him anymore, he would still be Secretary-General of the U.N.—his election supported by the British Government, in spite of my vehement objections—so this appalling situation would be even worse than it is.

Brian Urquhart, in a moment of moderation, has described Waldheim as “a duplicitous egomaniac.” As Brian’s platoon was the first to arrive at Belsen, his self restraint is remarkable.

Following the documented revelations of Waldheim’s past, Robert Rhodes James became chairman of a British Parliamentary committee to investigate Waldheim’s wartime history. His above letter, of March, 1988, was endorsed in the *Independent* by George Ivan Smith, a former prominent official of the United Nations:

> Robert Rhodes James describes Waldheim as “a sort of Secretary-General of a most loathsome kind.” I agree, as a senior Australian having served at the highest non-political level on the U.N. Secretariat....
>
> It is proper now that Waldheim’s inglorious record at the U.N. should be examined. He and his supporters are using his imagined international distinction as a shield to protect his domestic political base ... but Waldheim must not be allowed to pretend that he served the United Nations with distinction. He brought it to unprecedented crisis, financially and politically, shattered the morale of a dedicated international secretariat, variously offended governments and correspondents with gusts of misjudgment and uncontrolled temperament that often ended in public screams of rage....
>
> He is the only incumbent to have lobbied for the post. He is the only one suspected of having tied a number of senior appointments to the votes given in his support by their countries of origin.

Kurt Waldheim’s “imagined international distinction” was presumably invented, in the first instance, by his spokesmen at the United Nations—not least, one must assume, by “his only speechwriter.” Endorsement of Waldheim’s conduct of his office was adhered to, over years, by his senior colleagues, in the face of public doubts and staff protests to which no United Nations leader lent even transient solidarity; and in disregard of the Secretariat’s “unprecedented crisis” and of Waldheim’s violations of United Nations precepts. Just as Waldheim, even yet, might resign his present office and withdraw into decent obscurity, so truth can be served by an admission

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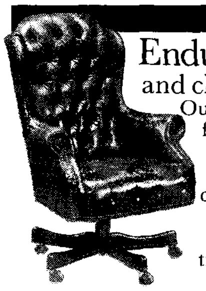

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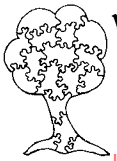

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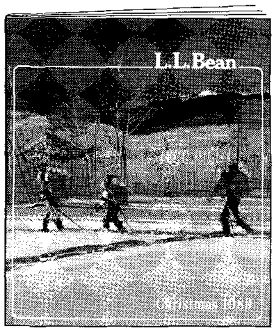

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of error on the part of those who persistently supported him, and who have not—in these late excoriations—acknowledged or explained their roles. Why "it is proper now that Waldheim's inglorious record at the U.N. should be examined" yet was not found appropriate by these same deputies while that record was being—against the public interest but "on behalf of the United Nations"—disastrously created is a bureaucratic riddle easily solved, perhaps, in the public mind.

The strain of knowingness that tinges the inner circle of a large organization contributed heavily, at the United Nations, to Waldheim's unimpeded career. Those in authority closed ranks as a privileged and authoritative body whose pronouncements connoted absolute knowledge. A quarter century ago, Conor Cruise O'Brien could discuss with some detachment his own need—during Hammarskjöld's venture in the Congo—for the approval of this "inner circle of the Secretariat":

> What I was actually most conscious of was the more primitive feeling of pleasure at now being, as I thought, "on the inside" of this major international operation, combined with a sense of deflation, on realizing how very much "on the outside" one had been, as an ordinary delegate in the corridors of the Assembly and at the Advisory Committee.

Of the disorder that, in the Congo itself, subsequently overwhelmed him in its contradictions, O'Brien then candidly recounted:

> I was bewildered and depressed by the way in which . . . I had lost the rapport with headquarters which I had believed myself to possess up to then. I was rather childishly anxious to reinstate myself in their good graces.

In these conditions, where individual self-esteem is dependent on the approval of a privileged circle at the institution, rebuttal of independent opinions expressed by outsiders becomes mechanical, for such views appear to threaten the exclusivity of inside knowledge. At the United Nations in the Waldheim period, the organization's leaders appeared not only to suspend belief in the possibility of illumination from outside U.N. walls but to consider any independent judgment concerning the institution as intrinsically misconceived. Thus, in the view of the initiates, the public, uninstructed, was "always underrating" Kurt Waldheim. Yet the world in general appraised Waldheim's character correctly, because vanity was not involved in its assessment.

Special knowledge, at the United Nations, has foundered on the rock of the Waldheim case. Like all mankind in trouble, Waldheim's late apologists now seek comfort, on this issue at least, in their shared human fallibility, stressing that "like everyone else," or "like most people," they took Waldheim's statements at face value. The truth is, rather, that doubts about Waldheim's character were entertained and aired everywhere but in the United Nations' inner circle. And members of the public bear no responsibility for promoting Waldheim to the world, or for issuing imperious denials of his failings.

IN "The Quality of Mercy," his study of international relief operations in Cambodia, William Shawcross relates that, in the course of his researches into the administration of such aid, he inquired for the "Historical Office" of the United Nations. In response to this request, Brian Urquhart, laughing, "said that in that whole vast building with its hundreds of offices, there was no room for such a place." Shawcross goes on to quote Urquhart: " 'There is no historian at the United Nations, because no two members here could possibly agree on what has happened, let alone on what should be recorded.' " Absence of, and antipathy to, objectively recorded history shapes the difficulties, and oppresses the future, of the United Nations. The U.N. Secretariat itself suffers drastically from a denial of experience that, now strangely exemplified in Waldheim's own story, has debilitated the organization from its earliest years. As with the formative betrayal of the international Secretariat by its first leader, Trygve Lie, so, with the Waldheim drama, the United Nations inexorably turns away from self-knowledge. How the organization acquired such a Secretary-General, what agencies conspired in his acceptance, what favors were extended in return, what manner of men indulged and praised him—these are great questions for all the world; but most of all for the United Nations.

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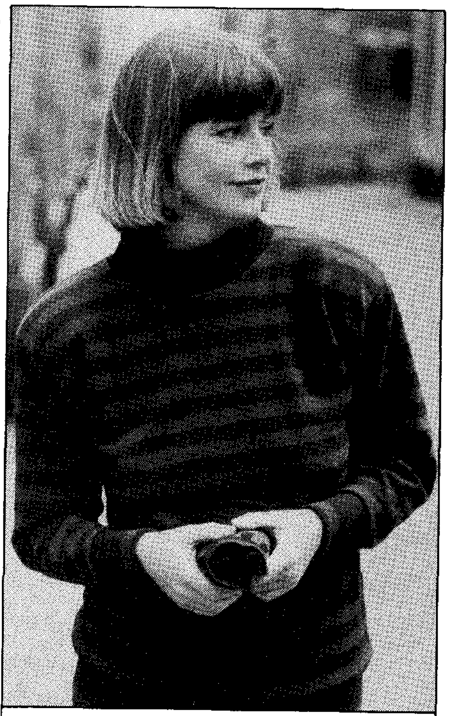
hopes that a United Nations terminal role in conflicts—which, with their millions of casualties and their store of misery and rancor, have endured twice as long as the First World War—should in recent years have been greeted as "success." Where nations have not entirely destroyed themselves, we may assume, with any such "conventional" hostilities, that ultimate exhaustion of the belligerents, together with the extraneous pressures and mutations of great power, will bring at last some form of quietus—as, in James Merrill's words, "Peace limps forward on a cane." In past ages, history could contemplate, if not with equanimity, those wars, so named, of thirty or one hundred years, in which hopes for mediation were crowned at last with a comparable "success." Such grim leisure is not at the disposal of the modern world.

The need for an eventual reconsideration and radical reconstitution of the United Nations concept was foreseen in the U.N.'s early years, and embraced by Dag Hammarskjöld, as an inevitable response to transformations in world conditions and to the realized experience of the organization itself. Such a reformation might with great advantage have been inaugurated twenty years ago, before the world entered fully into its present stage of crisis. The need for a new, intelligible rendering of the concept of international negotiation can only become more acute, and more clearly dependent on energies excluded from the present United Nations and its satellite interests. The very broaching of such an idea in realistic terms, let alone the proper pondering of its practical application, implies a maturity, and a receptivity to history, quite absent from a body whose intractable insistence on its own indispensability has so long precluded consideration of new forms of mediation matched to the modern age.

Dissolution of the existing United Nations, and reëmbodiment of its original precepts in a new and radically different organism, has been sporadically aired in recent years, outside the organization, as a remote possibility. Unknown, however, to the public, this idea has been more definitely advanced within United Nations walls, in recognition of the unfitness of the present organization and of its incapacity for serious reform. In 1985, at the conclusion of its seventeen-year survey of



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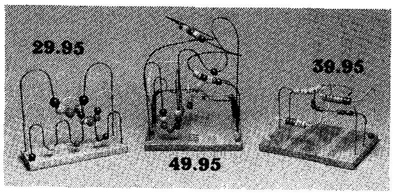

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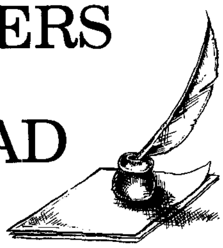

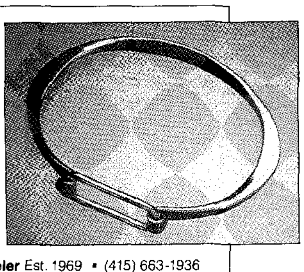

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United Nations affairs, the U.N.'s Joint Inspection Unit offered, in a document entitled "Some Reflections on Reform of the United Nations," its belief that "the time has come to begin to reflect in a serious and ambitious way on the definition of a third-generation World Organization." The document offers proposals that focus, "following the two unfinished experiments of the League of Nations and the United Nations," on "a third generation World Organization genuinely in keeping with the needs of the modern world." For all its omissions and disclaimers, its invincibly timid attitude to public engagement, and its delusion that regeneration could—or would—be usefully considered by those associated with the present body, this study has importance as an act of recognition; and as an attempt to transcend the intellectual stagnation of nearly half a century. So far as I can discover, it has received no serious consideration from United Nations leaders.

Any new organization that is to bring to the conduct of world affairs a meaning far beyond governmental maneuvering will be brought forth by public pressure stimulated by a new degree of anxiety and alarm. It will depend, as the United Nations has not done, on quality: on accountability to human reason and accessibility to public involvement; and on the individual distinction of its officers. Its architects should bear in mind that in 1945 the founders of the United Nations sought to guarantee the calibre and courage of the staff of a new "world organization." And that, in 1971, through the long effects of conspiracy and negligence, the U.N.'s highest office passed to "a lank, shallow, unsufficient man" (the words are Milton's): a leader who, as Conor Cruise O'Brien reports, embodied "exactly the combination of qualities which the super-powers agree in regarding as desirable in a Secretary-General of the United Nations." Such is the magnetic attraction, in our time, of prominence and mere position, with their reflected advantages of self-esteem, that this deceitful figure could be presented as a paragon, his very deficiencies exalted into talents, and his fawnings on tyrants rationalized as consummate diplomacy, throughout ten of this world's most cruel and dangerous years. —SHIRLEY HAZZARD

(This is the second part of a two-part article.)

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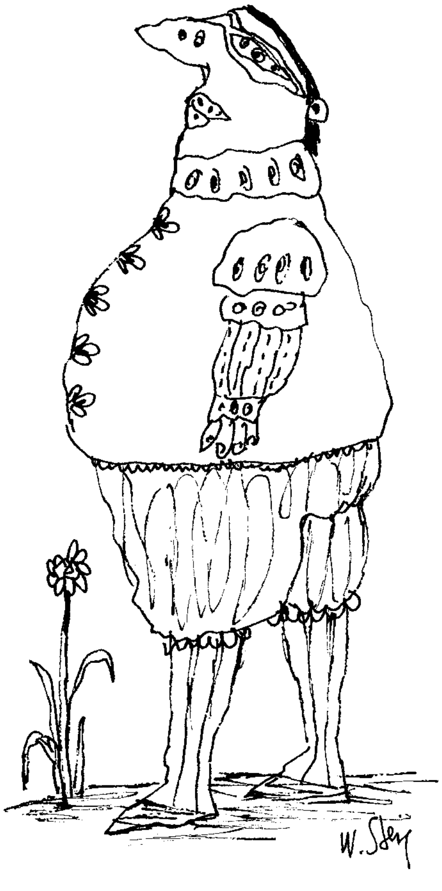
THE THEATRE

Accent on Youth

THE annual Young Playwrights Festival, always an occasion for rejoicing, opened last week at Playwrights Horizon, and I must say right off that 1989 seems to me a non-vintage year. Anything but a total loss, however; in each of the four plays on view there was something that justified its choice. The dramatists must be nineteen years old or under at the time their scripts are submitted, and most are beginners—too young to have their papers marked—so my opinions will be kept to a minimum.

The evening opens with "Painted Rain," by Janet Allard (aged fifteen at the time of submission). The setting is a sizable room, with two beds, in what appears to be an orphan asylum. The time is 3 A.M., and in one of the beds Teddy is awake and ready for games, and he starts pestering Dustin, in the other, who wants (or seems to want) only to go back to sleep. Teddy puts on dark glasses and kids around as a fake blind man; defeated, Dustin moves from bed to wheelchair, and goes over to an easel in a corner of the room and starts to paint. He is a cripple, who refuses to practice walking; he hides his leg braces from Teddy and, more important, from a social worker of some sort named Barbara, who appears in a later scene to tell them that a couple is arriving to check Teddy out for adoption. As the action proceeds, we realize that Teddy, for all his jokiness—he's a funny kid—has assumed his blind act to seem damaged and unadoptable; he doesn't want to leave Dustin, the "brother" he loves. "We're not brothers," says Dustin, who keeps shooing him away, and only at the end acknowledges his own need. The play, an unpretentious blend of feeling and comedy, is brief and well put together. The actors are always credible, under the direction of Mary B. Robinson. Incidentally, Dustin's throwaway comments about painting add a lot to the script.

"FINNEGAN'S FUNERAL PARLOR AND ICE CREAM SHOPPE," by Robert Kerr (aged eighteen at time of submission), is the kind of prankish exercise in camp on which I am not your ideal reporter. The title sets the show. The ice-cream parlor is a recent addition to the mortuary, where business has been only so-so, and it's meant to give employment to Kevin, the older son of the mortician; Kevin can't speak, and can barely jerk sundaes. His younger brother, Anvil, is a hard rocker and a roughneck. Their little sister, Pamela, likes to eat bits of cadavers. A pretty young woman named Carol, who is looking for a job, teaches Kevin the alphabet. Mother tries to keep the peace in the midst of her fractious family. Beaming, Finnegan brings in a corpse in a body bag, and once it's laid out in a coffin, little Pamela, bone saw in hand, gets to work. That is all I need to tell you, I guess, except that the playing of "The Stars and Stripes Forever" from time to time and the sight of two of the actors in silhouette in a pose reminiscent of Grant Wood's "American Gothic" lead one to believe that some sort of satiric comment is intended. There is little action, though plenty of activity, outrageousness being the key, but, for all the effort displayed (or perhaps *because* of all the effort displayed), I barely smiled. In all fairness, I must tell you that the director and the playwright's adviser were, respectively, Thomas Babe and Christopher Durang, a pair of dramatists as vintage as they come. The performance is all any playwright could wish for.


Fashion Plate

"TWICE SHY," by Debra Neff, is a comedy with a neat, ironic ending. Its heroine is a young woman who has a homosexual apartment mate—an arrangement that has worked out pretty well. She also has an interfering mama, who literally runs into an eligible fellow and contrives to have him go to the apartment and meet the heroine. The roommate takes an apartment with his lover, a large man in a peculiar costume, which may be Tibetan, who practices t'ai chi behind a locked bathroom door. The eligible fellow starts to move in with the heroine, although Mama still wants her back home. Heroine and eligible fellow launch an affair, which is unsuccessful for quite convincing reasons. He leaves; ex-roommate returns for a tête-à-tête. At curtain, the heroine is alone and anything but depressed. Miss Neff, who is eighteen, shows a gift, all too rare, for sophisticated comedy.

"PETER BREAKS THROUGH," by Alejandro Membreno (also eighteen), is a brief, clever skit that takes place in a whore's bedroom. At the opening, the whore is in bed, and a bright, tinkling red light darts about, then disappears. The whore's tough, menacing pimp comes in. Rough stuff ensues. The pimp leaves temporarily, and in flies—well, of course. "Say you believe," he implores the audience. "Clap if you believe. Forget it, she's dead." He flies off with the whore, but for a brusquely aborted journey. Again, Mr. Babe directed, and this time Albert Innaurato was the adviser.

A lot of admirable work was done, and by many able actors. There wasn't a dud performance all evening. Yet I missed the exhilaration I've felt at the other annual festivals. Sets, costumes, and lighting by Allen Moyer, Jess Goldstein, and Karl E. Haas, respectively. —EDITH OLIVER

THE CURRENT CINEMA

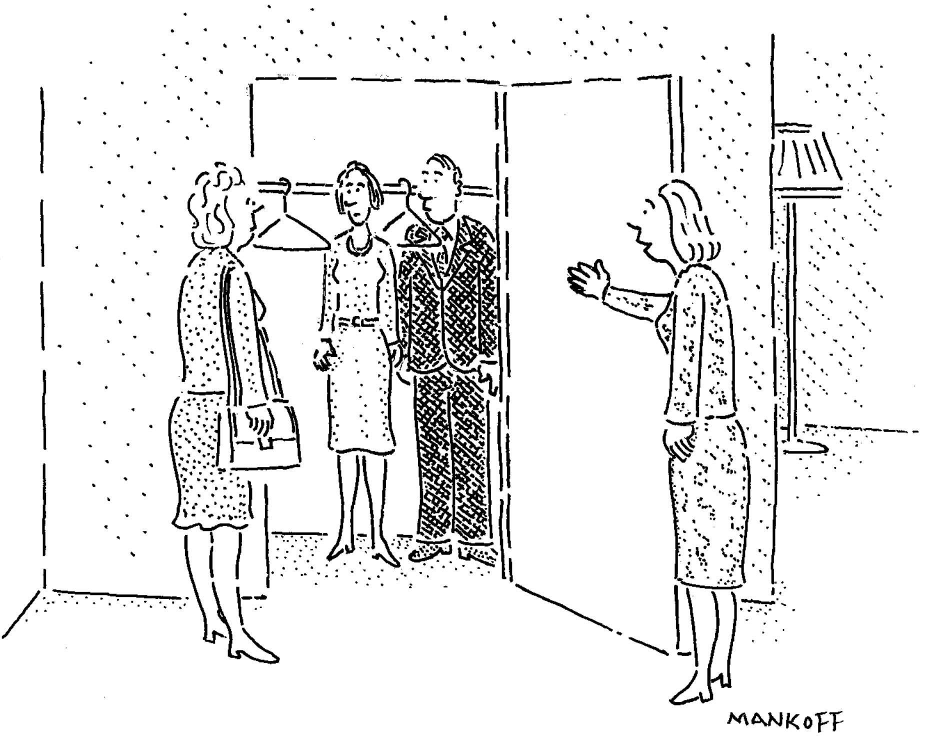
Satyr

IN the middle of "My Left Foot," the movie about the Dubliner Christy Brown, a victim of cerebral palsy who became a painter and a writer, Christy (Daniel Day-Lewis) is in a restaurant, at a dinner party celebrating the opening of an exhibition of the pictures he painted by holding a brush between his toes. For some time, he has been misinterpreting the friendly manner of the woman doctor who has been training him, and who arranged the show, and now, high on booze and success, he erupts. "I love you, Eileen," he says, and then, sharing his happiness with the others at the table, "I love you all." Eileen, not comprehending that his love for her is passionate and sexual, takes the occasion to announce that she's going to marry the gallery owner in six months. In his staccato, distorted speech, Christy spits out "Con-grat-u-la-tions" so that the syllables sound like slaps, and then he lashes her with "I'm glad you taught me to speak so I could say that, Eileen." The restaurant is suddenly quiet: everyone is watching his torment as he beats his head on the table and yanks the tablecloth off with his teeth.

It's all very fast, and it may be the most emotionally wrenching scene I've ever experienced at the movies. The greatness of Day-Lewis's performance is that he pulls you inside Christy Brown's frustration and rage (and his bottomless thirst). There's nothing soft or maudlin about this movie's view of Christy. Right from the first shot, it's clear that the Irish playwright-director Jim Sheridan, who wrote the superb screenplay, with another Irish playwright, Shane Connaughton, knows what he's doing. Christy's left foot is starting a record on his turntable; there's a scratchy stop, and the foot starts it up again—Mozart's "Così Fan Tutte." A few toes wriggle to the music, and then in a sudden cut the bearded head of the man that the musical toes belong to jerks into the frame, and we see the tight pursed mouth, the tense face, and the twisted-upward, lolling head with slitted eyes peering down. He's anguished and locked in yet excitingly insolent. Day-Lewis seizes the viewer; he takes possession of you. His interpretation recalls Olivier's crookbacked, long-nosed Richard III; Day-Lewis's Christy Brown has the sexual seductiveness that was so startling in the Olivie Richard.

The defiance in Christy's glanc carries over when the film flashes bac from the acclaimed young author an artist in 1959 to the birth, in 1932, o the crippled, twitching child—th tenth of twenty-two children born t the Browns—who is thought to be vegetable. The child actor (Hug O'Conor) is a fine matchup with Day-Lewis and does wonderful work, bu the small Christy might affect us as Tiny Tim if we didn't have the imag of the adult blending with him. Lying on the floor under the staircase like par of the furniture, Christy watches th crowded family life dominated by th violent, heavy-drinking bricklayer father (Ray McAnally), and bound together by the large, reassuring mothe (Brenda Fricker). Despite what th doctors say and what the neighbor think, Christy's mother persists in believing that he has a mind. One da when he's alone in the house with her, he hears her fall; pregnant and nea term, she's unconscious at the bottom of the stairs, lying near the front door. He squirms and writhes, flinging his body downstairs, and then banging his foot against the door until a neighbor hears the commotion, comes to the house, and sends her off in an ambulance. But when the neighbors gather they don't praise the boy: they don't realize that he summoned them. Seeing him there, they think his mother fell while carrying this moron downstairs. I don't know that any movie has ever given us so strong a feeling of an intelligence struggling to come out, to be recognized.

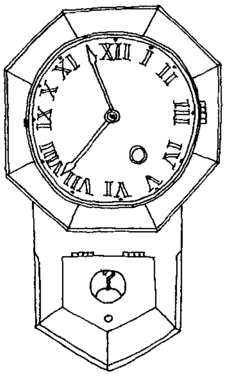
Finally one day, the boy, seeing a piece of chalk on the floor and desperate for some means of asserting himself, sticks out his left foot (he later described it as "the only key to the door of the prison I was in"), works the chalk between his toes, and makes a mark on his sister's slate with it. The family, awed, watches. After that, his mother teaches him the alphabet, and his brothers push him around outside in a broken-down old go-cart—it's like a wheelbarrow—so he can play with them. He speaks only in strangled grunts, but some members of the family understand him (his mother always does), and his father, who calls Christy's cart his "chariot," boasts of his accomplishments. It's a great day



"And these are the Andersons, our tenants."

for all of them when this pale, gnarled kid takes chalk in his toes and, with a gruelling effort at control, writes "MOTHER" on the floor. (Astonishingly, even at that moment you don't feel manipulated; the directing is too plain, too fierce for sentimentality.)

Day-Lewis takes over when Christy is seventeen and, lying flat in the streets, is an accepted participant in his brothers' fast, roughneck games. As goalkeeper for a soccer match, he stops the ball with his head. The whack gives you a jolt. It gives him a savage satisfaction; it buoys him up. Out with his brothers, Christy's a hardheaded working-class cripple. At home, he paints watercolors. And though he can't feed himself or take care of his excretory functions or wash or dress himself, his life is one romantic infatuation after another—he courts the girls with pictures and poems. (In some ways, his story is a whirling satire of the Irishman as impetuous carnal dreamer.)



This is Jim Sheridan's first feature film, but he's an experienced man of the theatre, with a moviemaker's vision and a grownup's sense of integrity. There's no overacting and none of the wordiness that crept into Christy Brown's later books. His autobiography, "My Left Foot," published when he was twenty-two, is a simple account (with perhaps a surfeit of creditable emotions). His best-known work, the semi-autobiographical novel "Down All the Days," published when he was thirty-seven (and smitten with Thomas Wolfe), is the kind of prose-poetry that's generally described as roistering and irrepressible. It's a chore to get through. But what a life he lived! Sheridan and Connaughton know that their story is not the making of an artistic genius: it's the release of an imprisoned comic spirit. What makes Christy Brown such a zesty subject for a movie is that, with all his physical handicaps, he became a traveller, a pub crawler, a husband, a joker. He became a literary lion and made a pile of money; "Down All the Days," a best-seller, was published in fifteen countries. The movie may tear you apart, but it's the story of a triumphantly tough guy who lived it up.

In a section of the film called "Hell," the father is laid off work, the family has nothing to eat but porridge, and Christy can't paint, because there's no money for coal—he has to go to bed. (The boys sleep four to a bed, sardine style.) It isn't until Christy is nineteen that his mother is able to buy him the wheelchair that she's been saving for. She's tough, too: she won't touch the money even during the porridge days. (She has her own hell: nine of her children didn't survive infancy.) There's nothing frail about these people; they're strong, and they're uncannily intuitive. The mother, who has always understood what is going on in Christy, is aware of the danger that the woman doctor (Fiona Shaw) represents; the mother worries that the doctor has brought too much hope to Christy's voice.

The cinematographer (Jack Conroy) brings the family close to you, and the images of flesh—the broad-faced Juno-like mother, the sculptural pink jowliness of the father, the girls in their first experiments with makeup, the raw-faced boys—come at you the way they do in a Dreyer film. In one scene, a bulging vein divides Christy's bony forehead right down the middle; sometimes when he tries to talk, he drools spittle. There isn't a wasted shot in the movie. A Halloween fresco is instantly stored as something not to be forgotten. And there is a moment that is simply peerless when Mr. Brown, the head of the house, is laid low; he falls to the floor—to Christy's province—and Christy is face to face with his dead father. It's a mythic image. But it doesn't go on a second too long. Neither does the wake—a real Irish wake that ends in a brawl. A man there offends Christy, who uses his talented left foot to kick the glass smack out of the guy's hand. (Christy loves to drink so he can misbehave.)

Everything goes right with the movie—which probably means that Sheridan and Connaughton hit the right subject for them and surrounded Day-Lewis with just the right players. But probably none of it would have worked without him and his demonic

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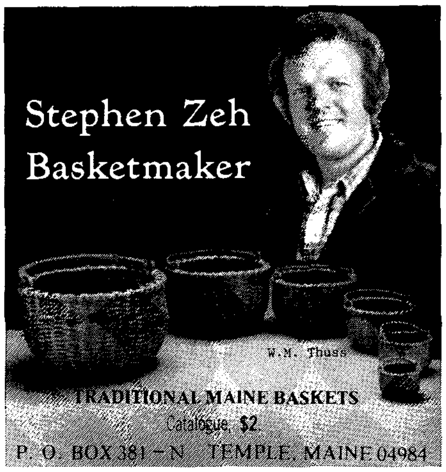

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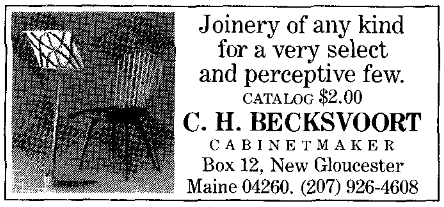

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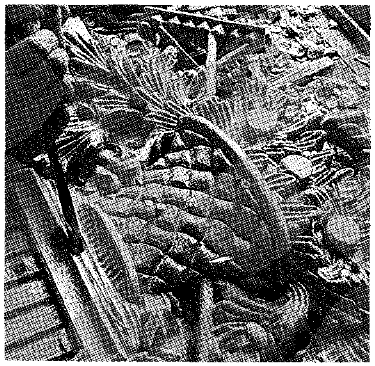

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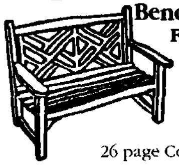

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eyes. (At times, Day-Lewis's Christy uses his eyes to speak wicked thoughts for him, as Olivier's Richard III did. They're flirts, these characters. As for the actors, when they're deformed they're free to be more themselves than ever.) Something central in Day-Lewis connects with what's central in Christy. You could say that they share a bawdy vitality, and they do, but it's much more than that. It's in the passion that Day-Lewis has for acting: he goes in to find (i.e., create) the spirit of the character so that he can release it. That's how he asserts himself. So he responds to Christy's need for self-assertion and his refusal to see himself as a victim. Christy Brown died, at forty-nine, in 1981; he choked on food at Sunday dinner. This great, exhilarating movie—a comedy about suffering—gives him new life as a legendary Irish hero. ("My Left Foot" is in the New York Film Festival, and will open in a few weeks.)

IN the darkness at the start of "Penn & Teller Get Killed," voice-overs are heard—smart, brassy backstage talk. Then the screen fills with hoopla and a blaze of graphics. The pair of prankster magicians are on a live late-night talk show; we see them hanging upside down on camera and standing right side up on several monitors at the same time. Penn, the big bluffer—six foot six and with brass lungs—yells at the studio audience, "Are we live? Yeah!" He demands of the people that they yell along with him, and they do, repeatedly; they enter into the lunacy of the screwed-up call-and-response that he insists on, and the joke builds. It's as if some new kind of bludgeoning, hip comedy were being invented—as if the Three Stooges had taken over "Saturday Night Live." But as soon as the loud, bright TV show is finished, and the studio audience is no longer there, the film's layer of carny crudeness and excitement—the shoot-the-works electricity—thins out.

The script that Penn and Teller wrote for their first appearance as screen stars is meant to take off from Penn's remark on the talk show that it would be fun if a killer were stalking him. Basically, the two magicians play murderous practical jokes on each other, and, the way the material has been directed, by Arthur Penn (no relation), it seems mechanical and surprisingly blunt. When the movie goes

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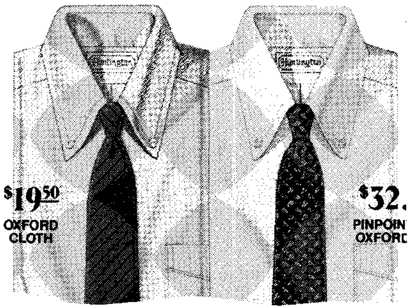

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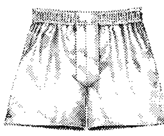

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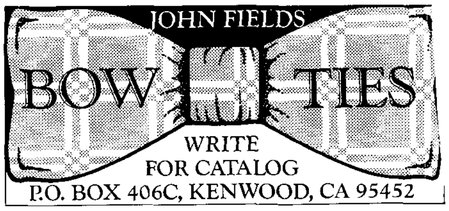

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nto a film-noir mode, it isn't sleep-nducing, like the comedy it calls to nind, the Carl Reiner–Steve Martin “Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid,” but it has some of that film's laboriousness. It's often on the verge of being funny or of being something; you can weary of your own expectancy.

Teller resembles a number of wide-eyed clowns (Stan Laurel, the young Alec Guinness, Tim Conway, Henry Gibson), but he doesn't light up anything in our imagination. This silent, withdrawn, business-suited mime keeps what's funny to himself; it might be said that his art is in not giving you much. Penn gives you more than you crave; he means to be grating and obnoxious, but this is supposed to be a put-on. It feels like the real thing.

Possibly the two might be more welcome screen presences if they had given their tricks a fanciful context (comparable to the one created in “Pee-wee's Big Adventure”). But Penn and Teller's specialty is hipster magic—that is, anti-magic; they demonstrate that by practice they can duplicate the supernatural revelations produced at séances, and can even effect medical miracles. It would go against the grain of their act for them to carry the audience along into a fantasy. The pitfall here is that they seem to have lost touch with the fun in magic—the sheer joy the audience can feel at sleek trickery. Teller doesn't do the tiny, implausible tricks that have made their stage shows famous. And they don't give us jokes; they give us a course outline in sadistic comedy. When the bullets fly and the bodies pile up we want it to be funny and macabre, but it's only an intellectual idea of funny and macabre.

MARLON BRANDO is airily light as Ian McKenzie, the sardonic anti-apartheid barrister in “A Dry White Season.” A naïve white schoolmaster (Donald Sutherland) who's had his eyes opened to the police brutality involved in the death of his black gardener imagines that he can obtain justice for the man's family in the courts, and asks McKenzie to take the case. After many years of fighting for human rights, McKenzie knows that he can't get anywhere with the rigged Johannesburg court, but he goes through the motions anyway. Directed by Euzhan Palcy, the young black woman from Martinique who made “Sugar Cane Alley” there in 1983, this new film is much more heavy-handed, and it has the disadvantage of an earnest, didactic script (by Colin Welland and the director, from a novel by André Brink). Performers such as Susan Sarandon, Jurgen Prochnow, Winston Ntshona, Janet Suzman, Michael Gambon, and Zakes Mokae sink into the obviousness of their roles and leave no trace. (Poor, uninspired, virtuous Sutherland is out of it; his characterization is one long whimper.)

Brando hasn't acted for years, but he's masterly, easy. There's no rust on him. The role is one of those humane, avuncular, Clarence Darrow knockoffs —the kind that Spencer Tracy and Orson Welles got to play—and his Indian-chief profile looks magnificent in court. He's even got specs pushed up high on his forehead; they give him a Dickensian air. He performs with such wry, smiling wit that he saves the picture (at least for the brief time he's onscreen).

The romantic in Brando must have responded to the old rebel lawyer's romantic gesture. McKenzie is showing everyone that no matter how strong a case he makes, the judge will rule against him. He's demonstrating the futility of trying to find justice in a corrupt, unjust system. But the audience is meant to see that his labor isn't really futile, that it serves to put pressure on the government and to wake people up—it's inspiriting. This applies to Brando's work as an actor, too. He may think it's futile, but he's wrong —it's also inspiriting. When he's on the screen, he's king of the hill and big is beautiful.

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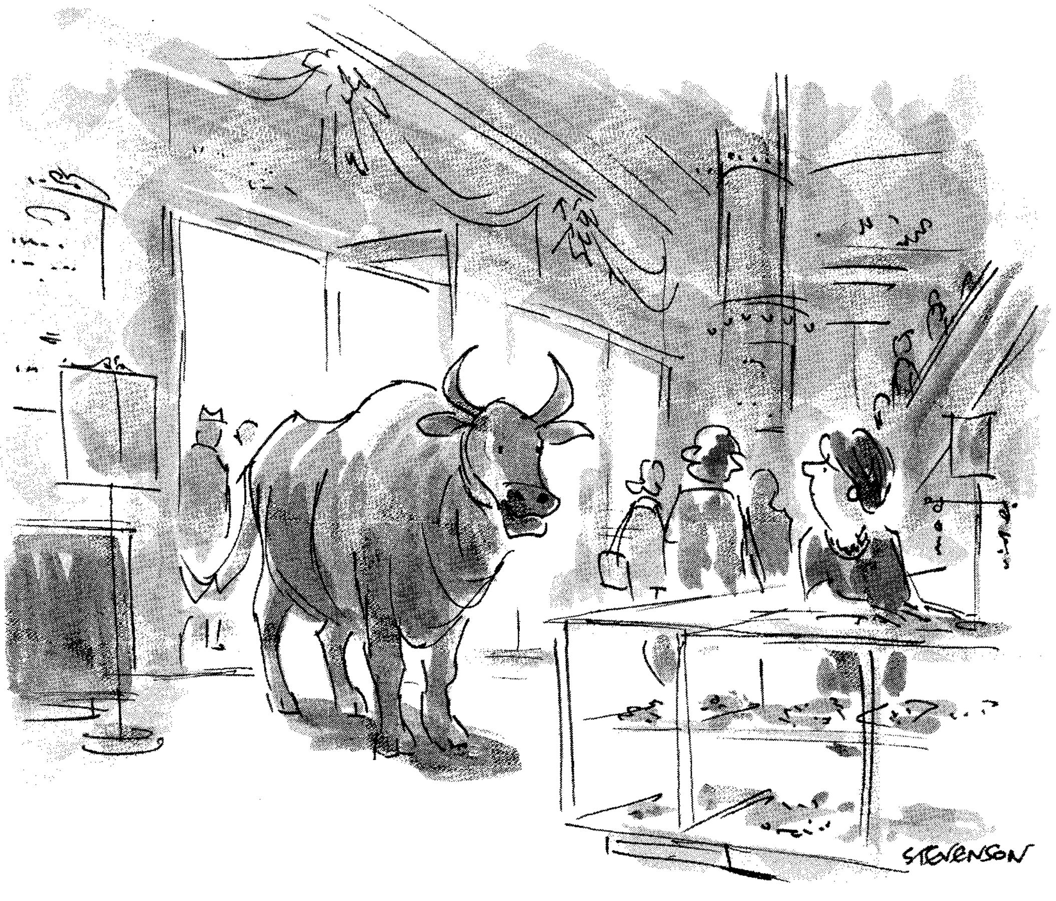
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

SEPTEMBER 21

EVEN when the President decided to lay himself on the line on what most Americans say is the nation's biggest problem—drugs—he did it with tricks. The buildup for his televised address on September 5th was tremendous, with the media playing into the hands of the White House in its orchestration of the event. The President was required by a law passed last year to make a report to Congress on a national drug-control strategy, so the White House took the opportunity to have the President make his first televised address. Even allowing for Bush's relative (to Reagan) lack of skill in this particular format, his speech wasn't very effective—as his own advisers knew. He was awkward, smiled in the wrong places, and, more important, said nothing very interesting or memorable. The speech had the ring of having been committeed. In his one stab at a Reaganesque touch—his reference to a ghetto kid named Dooney who had been the subject of a Washington *Post* series—he didn't seem to have the foggiest idea why youngsters living in ghettos turn to selling drugs. The President's program, such as it was, didn't deal with the context of the problem: the inner-city lives that offer little hope or incentive to not get on drugs or make big money selling them—or kill each other over turf. This is as hard a set of problems as there is, and they have to do with not just drugs but also the fact that our schools turn out so many kids who can't read, can't spell, and don't know where Mexico is. Businesses are increasingly confronted with a lack of potential workers with even the most fundamental skills. A society that is serious about itself won't keep ignoring this.

The President didn't really have much of a drug program and was deceptive about what he was offering. There has developed a pattern of Bush's appearing to propose more than he is actually proposing. Eventually, there will be a price to pay for such cynicism. He was proposing not, as he said, a $7.8 billion program but only a $717 million addition to the spending that had already been proposed for various drug-related programs, and moving the money around among the various accounts. There was to be more emphasis on enforcing the law against users, and less on interdiction the President still did not propose enough funds to provide for treatmen for all those who are already seeking it Furthermore, he set as his goal a rate of reduction in drug use that would be more modest than what has already been taking place. Within a day of the speech, a number of states, including New York, figured out that the offsetting budget cuts the President was proposing to pay for his new program would leave them worse off than before, even among the same people it was trying to get away from drugs (Nearly half the states would lose more than they would gain.) For example cuts would be made in the juvenile-justice program, and public-housing subsidies. A couple of days after the speech, when William Bennett the Administration's "drug czar," appeared before a Senate committee, it was also made clear that the states would have to match the new federal funds with far more new funds of their own. So, though the President ostensibly achieved his goal of enlarging the anti-drug program without having to ask for new taxes, the states would be confronted with having to raise large amounts of new funds. This approach has been turned to increasingly by the federal government, allowing a President to solemnly swear that he isn't raising taxes. But regardless of who raises it the tax burden on the citizens is still increased. Some of the offsetting cuts Bush proposed were for popular programs that Congress had already resisted cutting, and some of the proposed cuts were bogus. Richard Darman, the President's budget director, is very clever at this sort of thing, but it's beginning to irritate even the President's friends in Congress.

The buildup to the President's speech was injected with drama by the killings in Colombia, which escalated in August and which —along with raids on the estates of the quickly absent drug lords of the Medellín



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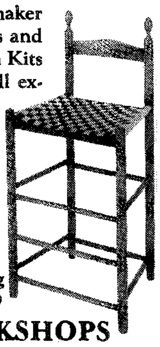

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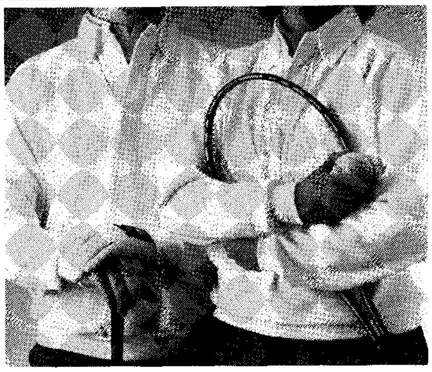
cartel—were a regular feature on the television news programs. The scenes were attention-grabbing because of their cops-and-robbers nature, and because they reflected contemporary cultural myths. Some of them seemed indistinguishable from scenes in "Crocodile Dundee II." Toward the end of August, while he was still on his vacation in Maine, the President sent $65 million in military assistance to Colombia, and in his speech said he would send about $250 million more, in military and law-enforcement assistance, to Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru. The Administration had actually hoped to help nab some of the major Colombian drug figures, but, what with all the publicity about Colombia's and our own interest in moving in on them, they got away.

The designated role of the up to a hundred United States troops to be sent to Colombia seems to shift, and to grow, and also to be somewhat open-ended. Last week, Administration officials offered highly hedged statements about the troops' function, saying that no combat role is "contemplated," and that "there are no plans for them to go into any sort of combat role." Earlier this week, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney announced that the military would play a larger role in trying to interdict drugs coming into this country, but he didn't say what that role would be. (But Cheney said the military could not, contrary to what some members of Congress are proposing, and what not all Administration officials find a bad idea, shoot down suspicious planes.) Administration officials are aware that what is stamped out in Colombia is likely to turn up somewhere else—that if old routes are shut down new ones will be devised—but felt that we couldn't turn our back on Colombia's President Virgilio Barco Vargas, who was losing control of his country, showed a stronger-than-before will to take on the drug lords, and had asked for help. The Administration sees the Colombian government as a more promising one to work with than those of Peru and Bolivia, where cocaine is also grown (nearly sixty per cent of the raw cocaine comes out of Peru), and where traffic driven out of Colombia might end up.

Whatever the merits of the President's drug program, or the demerits of his speech, his political advisers say that the important thing was that he gave the speech at all. The critical



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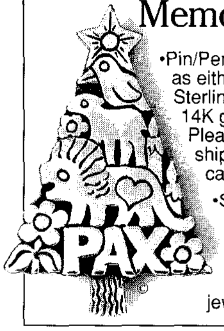

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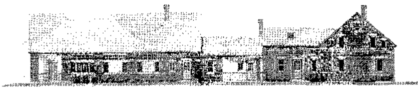

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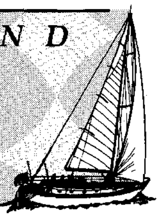

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point, they say, was to be seen trying to do something about drugs—that that, at least for now, is all that is demanded by the American people. Lee Atwater, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, says that for the past six months every poll he'd seen had drugs as the most important issue, and that "George Bush talking from the bully pulpit on drugs is good for us; every time he uses the bully pulpit it's a winner." (The speech was followed by a number of Bush appearances promoting his program.) Before the speech, a key political adviser to the President says, only about forty-five per cent of those polled felt that Bush was fighting the drug problem; now, a few days later, the adviser says, about seventy-eight per cent of those questioned think he is doing so. The adviser says that as the use of drugs increasingly becomes a taboo, Bush will be able to point to some real results, but that progress will slow as the problem gets down to "the hard core."

At that point, something will happen that people don't like to talk about: the drug issue will increasingly be seen through a racial overlay. Actually, it is pretty much seen through a racial prism now: the pictures that people see on television are of blacks having murdered or having been murdered, black neighborhoods under siege; they aren't shown pictures of middle-class professors, or wealthy businessmen, getting high on drugs. In people's minds, pollsters find, the subject of drugs is paired with the subject of crime (also, pollsters ask people how they feel about "drugs and crime"), and the crime issue has had a racial overlay for a long time.

One sensed as the President spoke that he was also baiting a trap for the Democrats—and they walked right in. (They have since partially extricated themselves.) A number of them said that the program should be larger, and a few also said that taxes should be raised in order to pay for it. Even House Speaker Thomas Foley, who has insisted in the past that the Democrats would not raise taxes without the President's full participation, said that it would be difficult to wage a real war on drugs without new taxes. The White House was delighted, and Ronald Brown, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, in a speech chided those Democrats who were calling for higher taxes. Brown said that Democrats shouldn't "lead with our chin." When Senator Robert Byrd Democrat of West Virginia and the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, early last week proposed to add $2.2 billion to the President's program—with more emphasis on education and treatment than the Administration was proposing, and less on law enforcement—and to pay for that with an across-the-board cut of .575 per cent in government programs, the White House fired on him as though he had proposed to give away the nation's gold. (Among other things, since Social Security, Medicare, and certain other domestic programs would be exempt from such a cut, over sixty per cent of it would come out of the Pentagon, and the Administration found this objectionable.) Some House Democrats objected on grounds that certain domestic programs had already been cut quite enough and that priorities should be set, and some said that the Democrats shouldn't help Bush make the point that the drug problem can be dealt with without raising taxes. The attack on Byrd's proposal from the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue served to solidify Democratic senators behind it; Byrd had in fact been under pressure from other Senate Democrats all year to add more spending for the drug program—to bring it up to the amount that had been authorized the year before. But the Administration's attack on Byrd was also in part a negotiating tactic: almost as soon as the White House had fired on Byrd, it also said that it would negotiate with the Democrats. Bush couldn't be seen to be adamantly opposed to any additional spending (and in this day and age $2.2 billion is no big deal), and pollsters have been telling both sides that people don't like seeing partisan wrangling—especially on such an issue as this. The Democrats have done a better job at getting across that they want to increase spending than that they want to change the emphasis in the President's program.

THE Democrats have been in a muddle over what to do about the President's proposal to cut the tax on capital gains, restoring the differential that had been removed by the 1986 Tax Reform Act. The removal of the differential was the most important ingredient in the tradeoff of eliminating certain tax breaks in exchange for lower income taxes. But Dan Ros-

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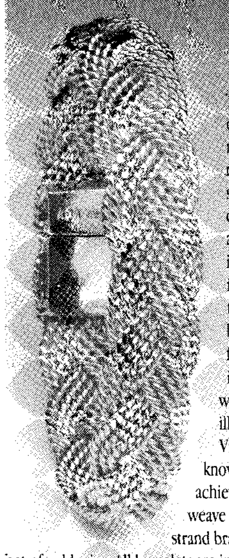

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tenkowski, Democrat of Illinois and chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, didn't have the votes to fend off a move by Ed Jenkins, Democrat of Georgia and a member of the committee, who had assembled a coalition of essentially Southern Democrats (plus Andrew Jacobs, Democrat of Indiana) behind a capital gains reduction. Though House Speaker Foley, who opposes cutting the capital gains tax, had said this summer that indexation of capital gains—that is, relieving the taxpayer of paying taxes on a holding's increased value caused by inflation—would be acceptable to him, liberal committee Democrats wouldn't have Rostenkowski's rather complicated indexing proposal. So last week Rostenkowski, who hates to lose, lost; some committee Democrats preferred to lose by flat-out opposing the capital gains cut—saying that they are for the little guy, not the fat cat—rather than win by compromising on the issue.

Meanwhile, in the Senate, Lloyd Bentsen, Democrat of Texas and chairman of the Finance Committee, has proposed his own counter to the capital gains cut: partial restoration for upper-middle-income and wealthy taxpayers of the deductibility of contributions of up to two thousand dollars to an individual retirement account (I.R.A.). Working-class people are already allowed fully deductible I.R.A.s. Under the proposal, funds could be withdrawn in order to buy a first house or pay for a college education. Bentsen's proposal ostensibly makes for excellent Democratic politics, and so the House Democratic leadership has now incorporated it in its alternative to the capital gains cut. (Pollsters tell the Democrats that people love this idea.) The provision for I.R.A. withdrawals helps toward dealing with some real middle-class problems, and it enables the Democrats to say that they are for the middle class while Bush, through his capital gains proposal, favors only the wealthy. But the Democratic plan offers more benefits to those who are better off than to the working class, and some House Democrats oppose it on these grounds. (As it happens, the I.R.A. proposal could help financially pressed members of Congress.) Though numerous Democratic senators and House members find the I.R.A. proposal attractive, there is reason to question why the Democrats

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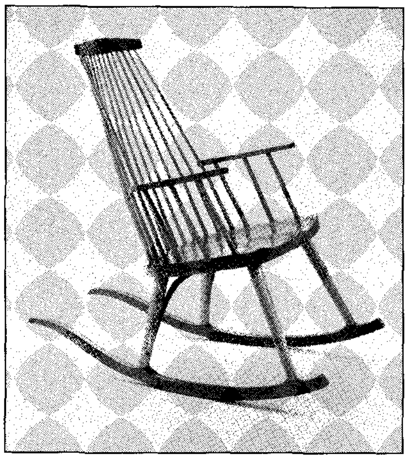
are talking at this point about cutting taxes. (The capital gains proposal would probably bring in new revenue for the first three years, as people turn over their investments in order to take advantage of the new tax, but would lose money after that.) The I.R.A. plan would be expensive, and though it is meant to encourage saving, the last time such a plan was in effect, in the early eighties, savings didn't increase.

The plan backed by the House Democratic leadership would also raise taxes on the wealthy by ending the "bubble," by which marginal tax rates go from the nominal top rate of twenty-eight per cent to thirty-three per cent and then, at a higher income level, back to twenty-eight per cent; under this proposal, the rate would not revert to twenty-eight per cent. (The leadership's plan would cap the capital gains tax at twenty-eight per cent.) The "bubble" had been on a lot of people's agenda for raising taxes next year, but this year's political exigencies have taken over. The issue goes to the House floor next week. The leadership hopes to attract votes for its plan by committing to deficit reduction the surplus raised by the tax increase on the wealthy—but numerous Democrats are unhappy that the Party has now got itself in the position of raising taxes at all. The President has said he would veto the proposal—which could put him in an awkward position as well. The situation seems redolent of 1981, when Reagan and the Democrats competed in giving away tax breaks.

IT is with great discomfiture that the House of Representatives, which has had a rough year, now finds itself having to deal with four sex cases involving its own members. Dealing with the matter of Jim Wright's alleged ethical violations was agonizing but easy by comparison. Wright was found by the House ethics committee to have engaged in a series of violations involving abuse of his office. Compared to that, the sex cases—particularly that of Barney Frank, Democrat of Massachusetts—are excruciating. Frank, who in 1987 said that he is a homosexual, has now admitted to having paid for sex with a male prostitute (after answering an ad), given him the use of his Capitol Hill apartment for a little over two years, and hired him to do personal errands, and kicked him out



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nly after a complaint from the landady that the man, Stephen Gobie, was unning a prostitution service out of e apartment. Gobie says that it asn't until after a second complaint, nd that Frank knew all along what as going on.

Dealing with the question of a coleague's sexual behavior makes House embers very nervous. If they were nxious—for fear of the implications or many of them—about getting into he question of whether Betty Wright ad truly earned her salary, getting nto the questions of prostitution and odomy (both of which are crimes in he District of Columbia) makes them xtremely apprehensive. Two of the ther three sex cases that are, along ith Frank's, before the ethics comittee are also unnerving for a great any members, if less talked about. us Savage, Democrat of Illinois, is ccused of having fondled and accosted Peace Corps volunteer while he was n an official visit to Zaire; Jim Bates, emocrat of California, has been acused by two female members of his taff of sexual harassment. (Frank rought the charges against Savage efore the ethics committee.) The hird case is the clearest cut, at least so ar as the facts are concerned: Donald ukens, Republican of Ohio, has been onvicted of having sex with a minor. he questions in regard to all these ases—and ones most House members ould dearly love to not have to be ealing with—are to what extent these ctivities are of concern to the House, nd, if they are matters over which the House should have jurisdiction, what re the appropriate sanctions.

The fact that the House is even onsidering these cases—especially the wo cases of sexual harassment—repesents something of a revolution. Traditionally, a high percentage of embers of Congress have come to xpect extracurricular sex as one of the fringe benefits of political power, another form of the ego gratification that so many of them seem to need so much. The caricature of the member of Congress as a boozy lecher may be somewhat out of date—but only somewhat. The opportunities, on Capitol Hill, on junkets, or wherever, for feeding his lusty appetite as well as his self-esteem are many. But what has changed with the times is the view of women as an object for exploitation; and the women have begun to fight back. Some mem-

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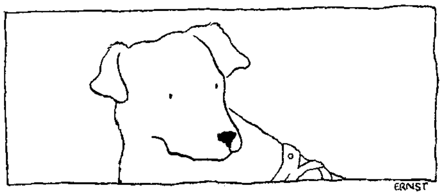
bers haven't adjusted and probably never will comprehend that evolving sexual mores have left them in the dust. (Gary Hart had a problem in this respect.) Now this change may become official business.

Barney Frank's case has received the most attention because it's the most exotic, and because of his particular role in the House. Frank is a very smart man and a leading liberal who has stood out through his shrewd sense of tactics and acerbic wit. He has played a major role in numerous legislative battles, and come up with a multitude of one-liners that have made their way into the press. But with the wit comes a certain smart-ass quality that makes Frank less than universally popular within the House, and his brains and ability can make him seem threatening. In addition, he is a reformer who has sponsored legislation dealing with ethics and has been sharply critical of the sleaze in the Reagan Administration, including, as a member of the Government Operations Committee's housing subcommittee, the unfolding scandal in the Department of Housing and Urban Development. An eminently quotable member of Congress usually leaves some resentment in his wake. The unusually smart one, who doesn't camouflage his sharp edges, can make a number of enemies. Coupled with all this, Frank's being on point as a liberal —and his open homosexuality, insistently and openly emphasized—made him a target. There is, of course, a homophobic streak in the right wing (despite its own collection of avowed and unavowed homosexuals), and Frank had given it material, starting before the recent disclosures.

The revelations about Frank and Gobie—told by Gobie to the Washington *Times*, a right-wing paper (owned by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church) that has been on a hunt for highly placed homosexuals, and published in August, while Congress was in recess—were a sensation, all the more so because so little else was going on. It was clear from the outset that they would cause Frank serious problems. The graphic language of the ad he answered was something that would stick in people's minds, and that could be—and has been—used effectively against him. Frank's own explanation of the episode, given in a press conference in Newton, Massachusetts, in his district, on the day the story broke, left a number of questions in people's minds—even people not ill-disposed toward him. The main question was how did someone as smart as Frank not know what was going on in his apartment. But there were others as well. In his press conference, Frank said that he had hired Gobie, and had tried, as a "Henry Higgins" figure, to rehabilitate him—by giving him chores to do, paying him, and helping him while he was on probation for possession of cocaine, oral sodomy, and production of obscene items involving a juvenile—and said that he had not had sex with him once Gobie went to work for him.

But the key question is whether any of this is the business of the House of Representatives—as opposed to Frank's constituents, who are apparently still behind him. Whether it likes it or not, the House of Representatives has had thrust before it the question of when private behavior becomes a matter for official judgment. There is no clear precedent. Six years ago, two House members were censured for sexual offenses involving House employees: Gerry Studds, Democrat of Massachusetts, for having sex with a seventeen-year-old male page; and Daniel Crane, Republican of Illinois, for having sex with a seventeen-year-old female page. But that is different from something that happens completely off the job. Similarly, Bates' and Savage's cases involve their official positions, as, in a different way, did Wright's. Frank's case, however unseemly, did appear at first to be clear of any official tinge—with one exception: Frank had written to Gobie's probation officer on Gobie's behalf on his official stationery. Then, just after Congress returned after Labor Day, the Washington *Times* ran a story saying that Frank had fixed parking tickets that Gobie had got while using Frank's car to, according to Gobie, conduct his prostitution business. (Members of Congress can nullify parking tickets incurred while on "official business.") Frank replied that he had tried to fix only those tickets he had incurred while on official business, but that things might have got mixe up. He also said that he had fixe tickets Gobie got while on congres sional errands for him.



The reaction within the House t Frank's problems essentially, and no surprisingly, fell out according to ho members felt about him before—wit some exceptions. Some Republican like Frank, and some loathe him. A moderate Republican who says, "Barney is one of the people who makes thi place interesting—he's bright, articulate, a superb debater, and very goo legislator," doesn't feel that Fran must pay a very severe price for hi transgressions. This man added tha not long before we talked some Republican congressmen were talking a lunch about the Frank case and on asked, "I wonder how many member of Congress have ever paid for sex?' "That," said the congressman I wa speaking to, "stopped the conversatio right there." More partisan Republicans want blood: having been th targets of many of Frank's barbs, the don't want him let off easy—but i would suit their convenience if h stayed in the House. It may seem tha these cases should be decided on th merits, but, as a House Republican aid puts it, "All other things being equal other influences come into play. I someone is very well liked and there i a thin line about whether to pursue th case or not, people are less likely t argue that it should be pursued." Similarly, the ethics committee's probe o Newt Gingrich, Republican of Georgia, for some private financing of a book, is fading away—because Gingrich is being a less confrontational figure and Democrats don't wish to make him a martyr, and because, anyway, the alleged wrongdoing, barring any further discoveries, isn't a very big matter. The Republican aide added, "On the other hand, there's real apprehension about investigating the private lives of members."

At first, most of the House Democrats, once they got past their initial shock, seemed to be backing Frank, and to feel that a good, and likely, outcome would be for him to be reprimanded by the ethics committee (a less serious penalty than censure), and by the House, and to stay in Congress as long as his constituents wanted. (Frank could be charged with violating Rule 43 of the House Code of Official Conduct, which says that a

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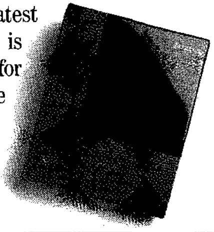

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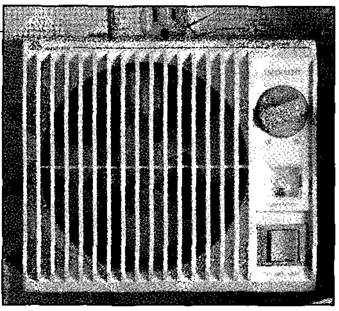

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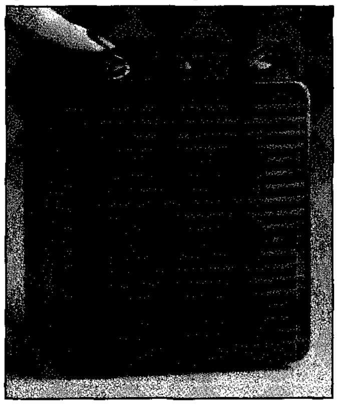

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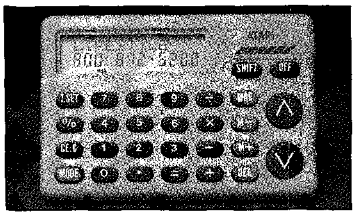

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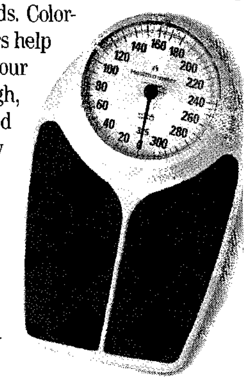

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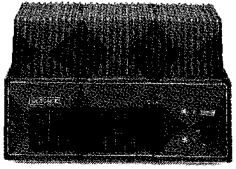

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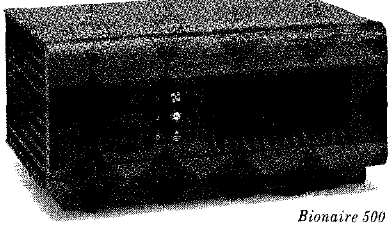

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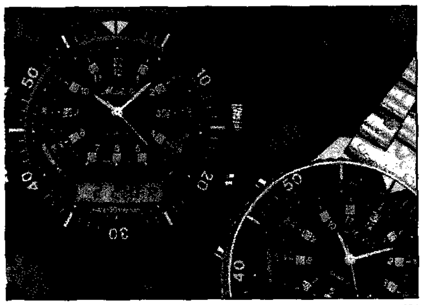

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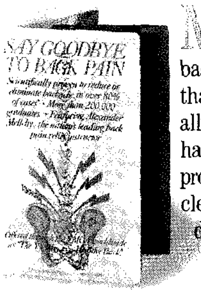

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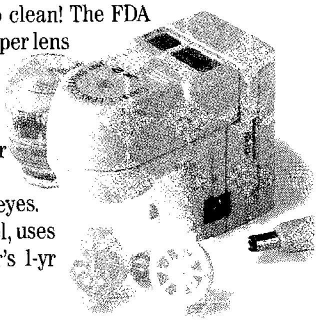

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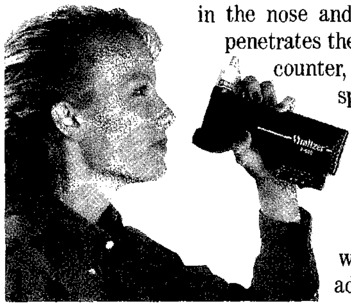

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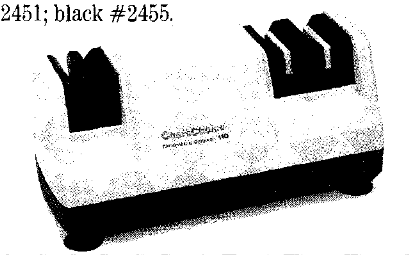

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ember “shall conduct himself at all mes in a manner which shall reflect reditably on the House of Representa- ves.” But this is a standard several thers may fall short of—if less spec- cularly.) These Democrats accepted rank's definition of the case as one in hich in this one episode he had done a upid thing, and didn't feel it should estroy his political career. They fig- red that the memory of this episode ould fade over time and Frank could egain much if not all of his effective- ess—and they highly dislike the idea hat what is widely referred to as the oonie paper could drive one of their ost talented colleagues from Con- ress. On the other hand, shortly after ongress returned, a House Democrat rom the Southwest—who likes Frank —said that this case is one he simply an't explain to the satisfaction of his wn constituents (he says that the fixed arking tickets is the hardest part), and hat Frank's situation is politically un- ustainable; others from places where hese things are very hard to explain elt the same way.

Frank himself knew from the start hat even if he stays in the House his osition has been damaged, and he as, in talking with his friends, been ery hard on himself. For a while, ccording to his friends, he gave erious consideration to resigning. hortly after Congress returned, he pologized to the Democratic caucus or the embarrassment he had caused is colleagues and said that he would nderstand if they couldn't defend him ublicly. Then, by the middle of last eek, he accepted the advice of friends hat he shouldn't take action now that ould end his political career, and his nclination was to go through the eth- cs committee process—which had een instigated at his own request— here he hopes to establish that some f the things Gobie has said are untrue. He will try to prove, with the help of he landlady, that he got rid of Gobie fter only one complaint from her.) owever, Frank has said that he may ot run for reëlection if he feels that he causes he represents are hurt by his resence, and on Sunday, in what has eveloped as a big blow to him, the Boston *Globe*, a liberal paper that has supported Frank, said he should resign. The *Globe* said that “the issue of Frank's conduct is not homosexuality, but prostitution which is illegal,” and that “had the issue been heterosexual

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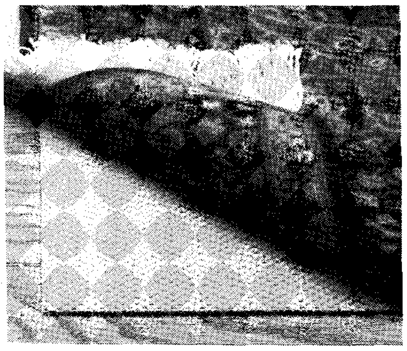

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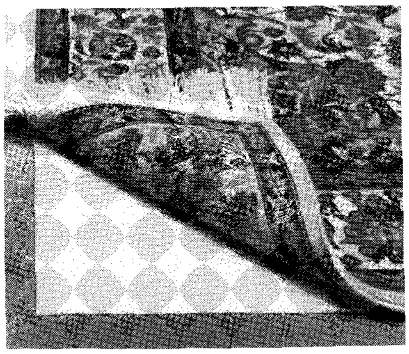

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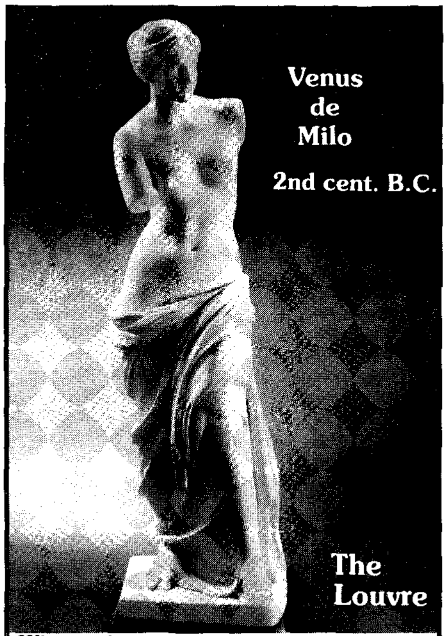

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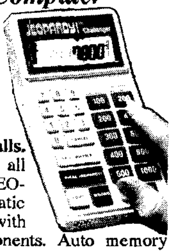

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prostitution" more people would have spoken out against him. In that sense, the *Globe* said, Frank "has enjoyed a double standard." The editorial also said that "Frank's effectiveness is diminished, perhaps permanently," and that no good would be served by an exhaustive examination of his sex life. Shortly before the *Globe* printed its editorial, a Catholic paper in Frank's district had called on him to resign. This week, to the dismay of a number of his friends, Frank's picture is on the cover of *Newsweek*, and in an interview with the magazine Frank was fairly candid about his homosexual history (saying that he had used other prostitutes); his friends wish he'd stop talking about it so much.

Some Democrats, though publicly silent, felt from the start that Frank should leave, on grounds that he was unacceptably hurting the Party. In the past week, as a result of the *Globe* editorial and the *Newsweek* cover story, his situation has deteriorated, and a growing number of Democrats, including some of his friends, think he can't survive to the end of this Congress. The *Globe* editorial hurt Frank's position so much because the paper had been such a strong supporter of his (and because, in its reference to a double standard, it put its finger on something that had been bothering a number of people), the *Newsweek* piece because it contained new revelations and because it was so prominent. One reason so few Democrats had defended Frank publicly was that they were afraid that, as often happens in these cases, there was more to the story. Some Democrats say privately that though gays are of course part of the Party's constituency, Frank has openly pushed things too far, making the Party vulnerable to a revival of the image of "the San Francisco Democrats." On these grounds, some are angry with the House leadership, which has thus far been protective of Frank—going along with his position that he should have the right to tell his story, and clear up some questions, before the ethics committee. According to this view, the constituents can elect whomever they want, but not everyone can represent the Congress. But there is no reason the process should not run its course (as, in effect, it did in Wright's case); that Frank's case inconveniences some Democrats isn't a good enough reason to abort it. W
can't get into the position of runnin
someone out of town whenever thing
blow up around him. There's no har
(though there may be inconvenience
in taking some time to consider th
seriousness of the charges. Frank ha
said that he won't resign, but a growing number of his friends think that h
may end up not running for reëlection
and may even get out sooner if h
becomes convinced he is hurting hi
party.

Many Republicans are of course delighted with the whole train of events
though they have said little—an
they have their own reasons to b
careful. Only this week did
major figure, Robert Michel, th
House Minority Leader, spea
out. The Republicans have been preparing to argue that they are dealing with their own case—in makin
sure that Lukens is subject to disciplin
by the ethics committee, and no
defending him—but that the Democrats are less vigilant. Michel, in response to a reporter's question abou
the Frank case, said he was "distresse
to have anything of that nature becom
a stain on the House of Representatives." But some House Republican
are worried that one of their party'
leading homophobes might get hold o
the issue on the House floor, and defin
it simply as a matter of homosexuality
The Republicans have their own ga
constituents, and a libertarian segmen
in their party. And one Republica
congressman said to me this week, "
don't know who the Republican gay
are here, but I assume there are some.'
Therefore, he said, a motion to expe
Frank on grounds of homosexualit
would present the Republicans as wel
as the Democrats with a difficult dilemma.

But Frank may not let it get to that
Some of his friends say that with al
that has happened in the past few day
—and with Gobie appearing on Geraldo Rivera's program this week an
threatening to name names of othe
members of Congress he says he had
sex with (Gobie has said he wants to
write a book and have his story become a movie)—Frank may overcome his powerful desire to make his case to the ethics committee, and go away. Increasingly, his Democratic colleagues, including some of his friends, began to hope that he would.

—Elizabeth Drew

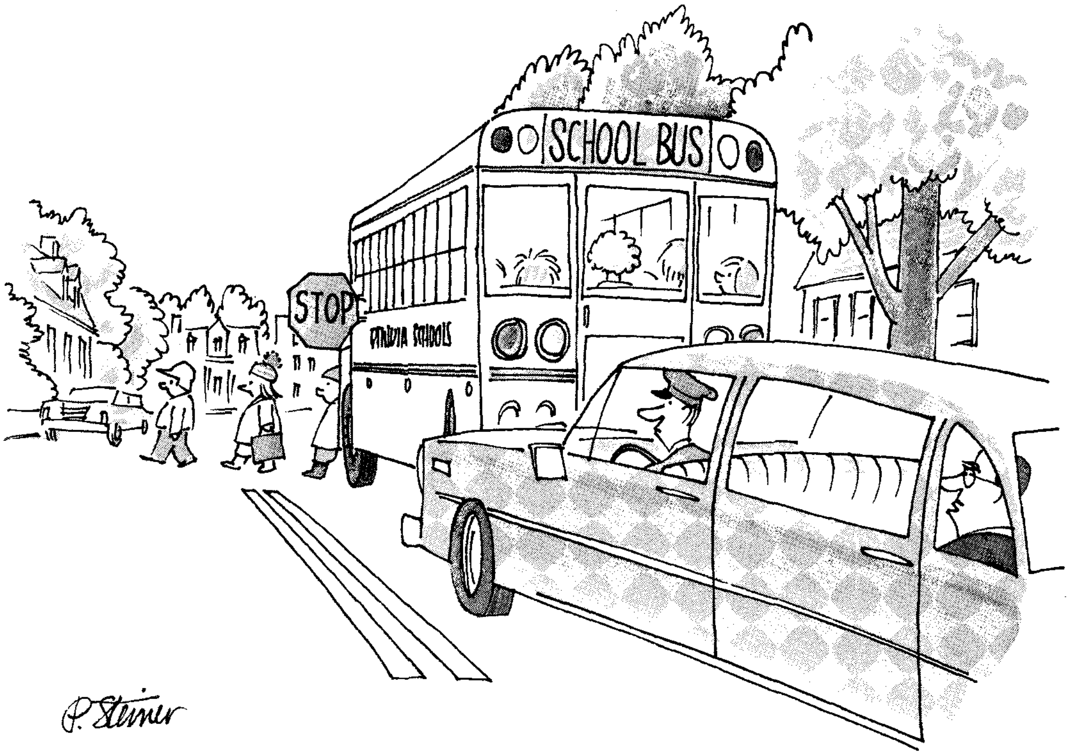
BOOKS

Metamorphosis

Jiří Weil's "Life with a Star" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $22.95) is an astonishing work of iction. It was published in Czechoslovakia forty years ago and is now appearing in English (translated by Ruzena Kovarikova, with Roslyn Schloss) for the first time. Hidden from us for all those years, the novel presents tself now as something alien, mysteriously remote, and self-contained. It's the work of someone who has been away in another world and has survived by becoming a connoisseur of solitude: the consciousness we enter when we open this book is as strange and stubborn as Robinson Crusoe's. The island where the narrator, Josef Roubicek, has been marooned is a city —Prague, in the early forties. At the beginning of his narration, he's already pretty far gone—so deeply absorbed in misery and loneliness that we fear he may no longer know how to make himself understood. His first words are addressed not to the reader but to a woman named Ruzena, who is present only in his mind. ("Perhaps she was not on earth anymore, perhaps she had never even lived.") He seems to have forgotten his manners; or perhaps his gaze has turned so far inward that he can't bring himself to speak to a human being face to face anymore. Maybe he's crazy. He lives in a madman's quarters, stripped of everything but a mattress, a stove, a washstand, and a broken coffee table, which he has preserved only because of its absurdity, its obtrusive uselessness. There's a hole in the ceiling, because Roubicek "smashed the tiles with an ax during the summer, when I was all alone in the house and wanted it to fall apart." He subsists on soup made from blood that the butcher sells him, and he spends his days reminiscing with the phantom Ruzena. He lives as if he were the last man on earth. Roubicek's existence is bizarre, but gradually its features become recognizable: in a literary sense, his is the kind of marginal life that modern fiction has made its special territory—the life of the insulted and the injured, the refused and the refusers, from Melville's Bartleby and Poe's "Man of the Crowd" to Kafka's befuddled victims, Camus's loners, and the babbling abandoned souls of Beckett. It is also, in terms of the harshest actuality, the life of an Eastern European Jew shipwrecked by Nazism.

Roubicek isn't mad, not at all, although the progress of his responses to the brutal and arbitrary changes imposed on his daily landscape is erratic. His chats with Ruzena, his absent lover, show us the sort of man he was before the catastrophe. "An ordinary bank clerk" is his description—he is, like so many modern characters, an unremarkable man whose pleasure in his humdrum bourgeois life is surprisingly intense. "I was born here, I knew almost every street, I had my own cafe, my movie house, my newsstand and tobacco shop," he says, explaining to Ruzena (or himself) why he wouldn't flee with her when he had the chance. And, later on, in a similar passage: "Long ago I had done ordinary things; I went to the bank, I ate and slept, I made love with Ruzena and waited for her on street corners. I went to the movies and to coffee-houses." In his evocations of prewar life, he keeps repeating the words "no longer," and the effect of his incantations over the dead past is both elegiac and ironic. His yearning is convincing, but the vanished life he projects on his bare walls seems almost laughably humble, an impoverished image of a Golden Age. Even his affair with Ruzena isn't quite an idyll: she's a married woman.

As Roubicek wanders in a city made strange to him by the new laws of the oppressors—as well as in his own mind, where images of the no longer Prague superimpose themselves on the grim present—his course becomes less and less predictable. We're on his tail, then we lose him, then we pick him up again, and every time he reappears he looks a little different. Whenever we think we've understood him, he changes. Weil's imagination has an extraordinary, catlike agility: over and over, he adjusts his hero's relation to the world, spins him around and makes him re-orient himself—us, too, since we're seeing everything through Roubicek's eyes. There are fresh perceptions and startling metaphors on just about every page of "Life with a Star": a series of transformations presented briskly and swiftly and



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plainly, like time-lapse photography of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly—a natural process revealed, by ellipsis, as a miraculous one. Weil's novel is really about the metamorphosis of a man's spirit. The images of Roubicek that pass before us throughout the book—the lunatic hermit, the pathetic dreamer, the sad-sack bourgeois everyman, the hopeful coward waiting for deliverance, the fatalist too exhausted to care—are vivid, but they're only stages in a development. When, in the last pages, a final Josef Roubicek emerges—wondrously clear—we know where he came from: we've seen the whole process from inside the cocoon.

IN Jiří Weil's vision of the Holocaust, the Jews of Europe are confined not only physically, in ghettos and camps, but also imaginatively, in their oppressors' minds and ultimately their own. The star of the title is the six-pointed yellow star that Jews had to wear over their hearts. When Weil's hero receives his emblem, he knows instinctively that something monstrous has taken place: "I was no longer even Josef Roubicek," he says. "I had become a special person whom everyone looked at and made way for." For Roubicek—who has proved himself capable of adapting to the regulations of the occupiers, of accepting both the physical privations and the severe restrictions on his freedom—this symbol, the accusatory star, is the deepest injury, the most thorough humiliation, the ultimate erasure of his humanity. The star, he says, "belonged to a fair, to a Punch and Judy show, to somersaults, powdered faces, and kicks in the behind." What's most terrible about this bright cloth label is that it wrecks the hero's adaptive strategy of withdrawal, of hibernation. Before this, he has said, "I only wanted to sleep, to know nothing and hear nothing," and, "I longed to be an animal." But the star has the effect of exposing him, making a spectacle of his life. It's as if the curtains of his apartment had suddenly opened to reveal a vast, hostile audience outside, watching, jeering, laughing at him as he stumbles around in a costume he can't take off. This star casts a pitiless light. It's the hunter's torch that startles the animal in its cave; and it's the spotlight that panics the actor who has been pushed, unwilling and unprepared, from the wings. At this moment, Roubicek makes the

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orrible discovery that what he ought was a den is in fact a stage: the age, constructed like a scaffold, that e Nazis have made of Europe.

The issuing of the star is a turning oint—perhaps the most important ne, in this novel that seems never to op turning. It's the beginning of the d of the stunned consciousness we ncountered in the opening pages of e book. The star forces Roubicek to e himself in a different way, as the nemy sees him, and it's not what he xpected. He made the mistake of beeving that what they (in this novel, e Germans are identified only as they") wanted from him was someing real—his property, his labor. He ow starts to recognize that they want omething else besides, something ore elusive and more difficult to safeuard. They want the power to negate e very reality of the Jews, to make eople like Josef Roubicek phantoms ven to themselves. Roubicek's Crusoeke existence, we realize, was a form of esistance: eliminating his possessions there would be nothing for the Nais to confiscate; weakening himself hysically so his body would be of no se to them, either. But he's been fightg in the wrong places, with the rong weapons. Nostalgia and fantasy ave nearly destroyed his imagination, he real battlefield. The star illumiates it like a flare.

The change that comes over oubicek is gradual but profound. He's till afraid (as he should be), but the etaphors by which he understands his ife take on a different tone, sharper, ore aggressive, more contemptuous f the powers that govern him: he hinks of the German occupation ometimes as a game and sometimes as circus, and when the transports begin e refers to their terrifying unknown estination as a menagerie. There's a itter, liberating humor in these obserations. Roubicek seems to cast a colder ye on his plight than his fellow-vicims do on theirs. It's as if he were rying to see himself not as a member of family or a community or a race, or ven as a human being with a unique, ignificant history (all those values are o longer), but, instead, as the dimineshed creature he has become: a small nimal, or a clown—something, in any event, whose existence depends only on chance and the whims of the powerful. He allows himself, that is, to forget what he was and to view his life with

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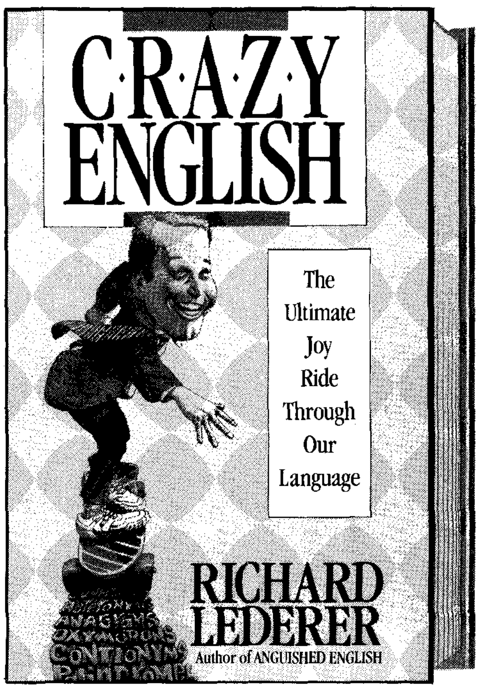
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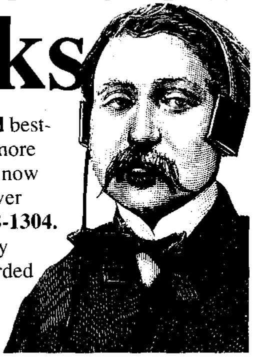

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the detachment of someone who's simply listening to a story, a fairy tale about a frail, luckless wanderer named Roubicek. It's a tale, of course, that has been invented by his masters, and one that he keeps hearing variants of, with different names, different details, and the same ending. One of the great beauties of this book is the apparent ease with which the novelist represents the lives of other Prague Jews, tells stories other than Roubicek's. On the hero's forays (mostly involuntary) outside the confines of his own room and his own mind, he finds a city full of narrators: dire fantasists who work fourth-hand news and the thinnest of rumors into densely elaborated visions of what awaits them; oral historians who recount anecdotes about remarkable instances of brutality and give these events the conviction and shapely inevitability of legend; and a few, like the narrator's friend Robitschek, a would-be suicide, who seem to be trying to rewrite the story they've been inscribed in—to *change at least the middle, to choose* their own route to the ending, which has the appearance of something unalterable, carved in stone.

Weil takes his narrator, and his readers, beyond all these kinds of storytelling: he uses them in order to transcend them—to show us how a limited, servile imagination becomes a truly free one. It's important for Roubicek to learn to adopt the world view of his masters, just as, earlier, he needed to retreat from the world, huddling in the fragile solace of denial. At some point, we realize that he's no longer speaking with Ruzena, living that fantasy of the survival of prewar values and pleasures—and that he has shifted his identification to another image of survival, a stray cat who has warily moved in with him. This cat, to whom Roubicek gives the name Tomas, is one of the few great animal characters in fiction, and their relationship is as richly conceived as that of the solitary old man and his dog in De Sica's film "Umberto D." (André Bazin said of that film, "I have no hesitation in stating that the cinema has rarely gone such a long way toward making us aware of what it is to be a man. And also, for that matter, of what it is to be a dog.") The bond between Roubicek and Tomas is obvious: they're both unwanted, constantly threatened, hungry, small, frightened, despised. When Tomas first appears—while the narrator i still in his reclusive and nostalgi phase, and soon after his admissio that he longs to be an animal—Roubicek treats the scruffy visitor as reflection of himself. "They thrashe the soul out of you," he says. "Ho could you understand happiness? Bu happiness does exist, Tomas. It's onl now that they're trying to convince u that it doesn't and that it never di Just try to remember, Tomas—yo probably also used to wade throug high grass; maybe you once ha silky fur and didn't live off garbage. . . . Wait, how can I explain what happiness is? Larg bowls of milk for you, Toma with lots of cream floating on top and roll spread with butter, raw liver, an then to lie down in the sun and b warm and safe. All that exists. Yo must believe me." There's a clear not of desperation in those last two sentences, and Roubicek's efforts to convince Tomas (and himself) of the possibility of the restoration of happines don't last long. Soon, this man, wh has said, "I wasn't learning anythin and didn't want to learn anything, stops projecting his hopes and fears o his animal companion and begins t admire the cat's distinctive skills an its view of the world—which is neithe his nor his oppressors'. He says t Tomas, "If you could tell me stories they would be about simple things about fights on rooftops, climbin trees, and hunting in the grass."

The fact that Roubicek saves himself, in part, by learning to enter an share the imagination of an animal i one of this novel's characteristic ironies. Reducing human beings to th condition of animals was, after all, one o the aims of the Nazis' program. In hi halting, unsystematic fashion, Weil' hero manages to subvert their intentions: he turns every restriction into kind of advantage. Made to feel like buffoon, he develops a cynical, corrosive wit: his mind becomes as nimbl and cunning as that of Lear's fool Ransacked of his worldly goods, hi standing, and the objects of his affection, he responds, "They had taught u to stop loving things—and that wa good." Imprisoned as a character in a story, he eventually discovers his right (under the laws of literary irony) to rebel, like Frankenstein's monster, against his author: "I'm beginning to be fed up living a life someone else made up,” he says. In the same way, he earns, through his empathy with Tomas, that being an animal isn't necessarily such a bad thing: the cat has quick instincts, an elegantly economical approach to living, and dignity. And his presence helps Roubicek understand the unnaturalness, the deep, profane artificiality, of what the world has become.

WEIL's hero develops, through the shocks and dislocations of his wartime experience, a flexible, supple magination. But there's nothing intellectual about the process. Weil makes it seem instinctive, as if a man's ability to manipulate metaphors and images for his own purposes—for his own *survival*—were the most natural function n the world, the ultimate adaptive tool of the human organism. The narrator's imagination is stocked with homely, unexceptional stuff: the only magery available to him is derived from popular theatre, folk literature, and nature, and Weil confines himself rigorously to this inventory. He never strays outside the boundaries of an ordinary man's imaginative resources—and shows us that those humble resources can be enough, and more than enough, to live on. That point of view may seem overly sanguine (especially in a Holocaust novel), but the brilliance of Weil's writing—with its metaphors that explode in our minds like expiring stars and keep shining there, visible long after they're gone—convinces us. And, besides, even if “Life with a Star” is in some sense a fable about the subversive power of the imagination, it's one that the author is fully entitled to: Weil, like his hero, experienced the occupation, and he, too, decided to hide (in the house of Kafka's niece, according to one legend) rather than board a transport train. And he lived to tell a story—if not precisely his own, at least the story of someone as much like him as Tomas the cat is like Roubicek. (When Weil died, in 1959, “Life with a Star” had been out of print for several years; the Communist Party had labelled it “existential” and banned it.)

In the final pages of the book—after Roubicek's life has been spared, through an absurdly unlikely bureaucratic error, after his doppelgänger Robitschek has succeeded in killing himself, after Tomas is gone, after he hears Ruzena's name in a list of the dead read over a loudspeaker—Weil gives his hero, and us, a last set of epiphanies, a series of statements that turn abjectness into a kind of beauty and this novel into a great, fierce poem of refusal. “I smiled because they couldn't get me now, when my life no longer had any meaning for me,” says Josef Roubicek. And, “I no longer have anything to fear. I no longer have a name or a life.” And, “I was no longer Josef Roubicek, bank clerk. I no longer knew quite what I was and what I would be.” And, finally, as he destroys the last of his possessions, a few pieces of paper that he has written on: “It was then, when the last sheets of my scribblings were burning in the stove, annulling the name of Josef Roubicek, that I understood that the Josef Roubicek who wanted to make excuses, to evade, and to dodge, only to avoid freedom, no longer existed and would never exist again.” In his new freedom, he's abandoned enough to turn his most cherished words against their former meaning: the “no longer” of this man without a name isn't the same as the “no longer” of Josef Roubicek's litanies of vanished joys. And, in this final metamorphosis of the novel's voice, we realize that Jiří Weil has achieved something staggering, almost unthinkable. His sophisticated, modernist, humane imagination has made the dark horror of the Holocaust into an occasion of enlightenment. The star that shines so mercilessly into Roubicek's life has an unexpected, accidental effect. It turns this room—this cave, this mind, this cocoon—into a camera obscura, and casts on the bare wall the true image of a man.

—TERRENCE RAFFERTY

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

JASMINE, by Bharati Mukherjee (Grove Weidenfeld; $17.95). Married at fourteen and widowed at sixteen, Jasmine arrived alone in Florida from Punjab, India, knowing little more about America than what she could see in a brochure for the Florida International Institute of Technology. In one long, vivid flashback, we learn what led up to her exile, and how she ultimately found herself in Iowa, where she now lives with her lover, Bud, in conscious denial of a past that includes horrors on both conti-

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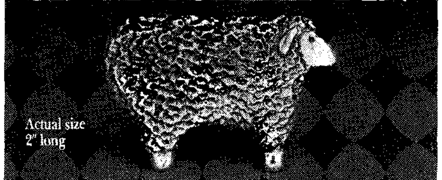

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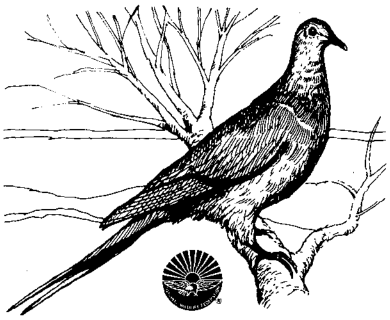

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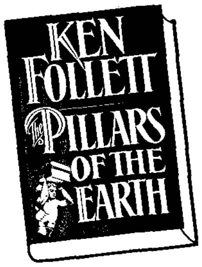

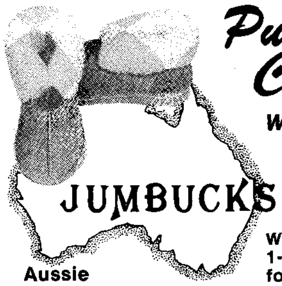

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nents. "Dullness is a kind of luxury," she tells us, but even in Elsa County things happen: Bud, a banker, is shot by a distraught farmer and confined to a wheelchair; with Jasmine (now called Jane) he adopts a Vietnamese teen-ager, who grows more secretive and remote with every year. As in the author's award-winning collection "The Middleman and Other Stories," what is most compelling here is the portraits of various outsiders—those who have "sealed" their hearts and those who haven't. It takes the whole novel to sort through the web of characters and events, and if, at the end, Jasmine's abrupt change of plans is jarring (and unconvincing) it is in keeping with her nature—"reckless from hope."

THE MEN WHO LOVED EVELYN COTTON, by Frank Ronan (Pantheon; $17.95). "I have been in love with Evelyn Cotton for twenty-four years and four months less eight days. We have made love twice. The first time was twenty-three years ago. The second time was yesterday. Does that make this a sad story: make me a comic figure?" Thus begins the sad narrator's comic story, about a secretarial student in Oxford who becomes pregnant by a callow and callous university undergraduate, is married by a wacky professor who *likes to appear to have a wife, and is* swept off by an artist who finds her convenient for keeping his clothes mended, and then by the artist's accountant, who has a child of his own for her to care for. Evelyn, as relief from daily abuse, begins to write novels and, almost casually, gets them published, becoming in the process an icon of the women's movement. The narrator enters her story only very incidentally, to his regret; it is his rancorous assessment of his rivals that lends humor to his account, along with mordant observations of love. His voice, rather than the inscrutable Evelyn, is the entertaining main character.

GENERAL

HONORABLE JUSTICE: THE LIFE OF OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, by Sheldon M. Novick (Little, Brown; $24.95). Mr. Novick begins his life of the noted Supreme Court justice (1841-1935) by explaining that it is the first biography, because Holmes' executors selected "a succession c authorized biographers, each o whom died or abandoned the tas unfinished," and he expresses appreciation for their research. H himself deserves credit: this is a ideal biography for the intelligen general reader. Mr. Novick wonderfully balances the personal—Holmes domineering father, doting mother eccentric wife, loves, and eminen friends—with the historical. He als gives us an outline of Holmes thought and shows him working a his profession—he was Massachusetts' chief justice when Theodor Roosevelt appointed him to the Supreme Court, in 1902. Though often in dissent on the Court, Holme nonetheless seems to epitomize ou nation in his period, and the fascination he exerts, a combination o toughness and style, shines througl this book.

ITALIAN DAYS, by Barbara Grizzut Harrison (Weidenfeld & Nicolson $22.95). A wholly absorbing trave journal—a literary adventure, a well as an excursion to celebrat Italy, "God's beautiful world.' Starting in Milan, the author work her way south through Venice an Florence to Rome, with side trips t towns and villages along the way and thence to Calabria. Ms. Harrison has the gift of seeing: she look at Renaissance paintings and the statues of saints and bravos, and gives u fresh and acute perceptions. She observes the passing show in th streets, piazzas, and gallerias of th cities, and tells us what people say t each other, how they look and dress she records their jokes, and thei comments on tourists (uncomplimentary, on the whole). She is als aware of and saddened by the crime the decay and neglect of ancien treasures, and the country's to prevalent poverty. The author grew up in a large Italian family i Brooklyn, and a subtheme of th book is her search through Abruzz for relatives. If it is a bit too lovingl detailed, the self-indulgence can b forgiven, for she has written a beautiful book. Photographs.

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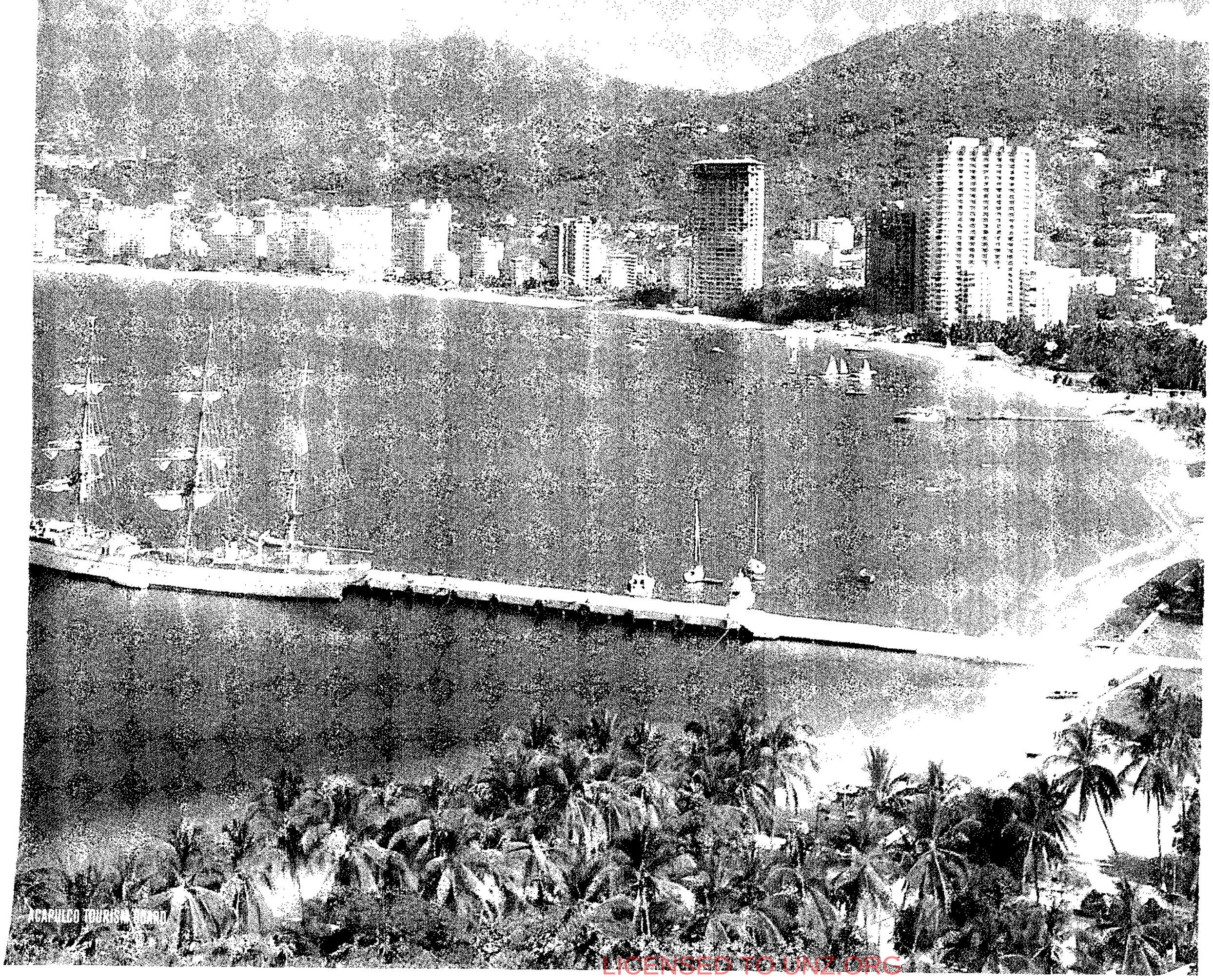

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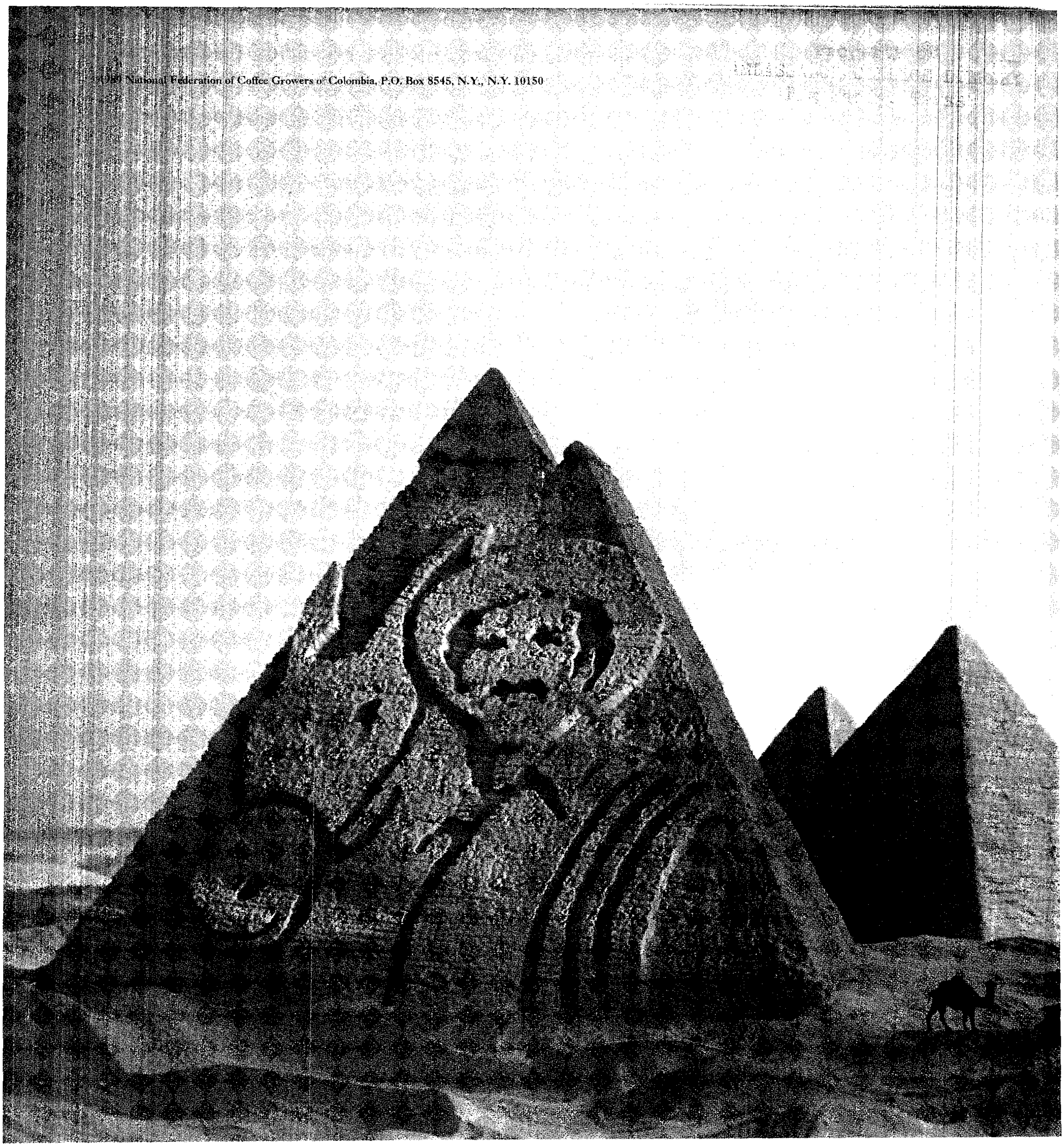

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